

## Management Response

**Oxfam Management response to the review of Resilience in the West Bank ‘From Emergency Food Security to Durable Livelihoods: Building Resilience in the Occupied Palestinian Territory’ project**

*(Effectiveness Review Series 2018/19)*

<b>Prepared by:</b>	<i>Mohammed Ammar – Saving Lives Manager</i>		
<b>Contributors:</b>	<i>Mohammed Sawaftah – Economic Justice Manager</i> <i>Fadi Touma – Gender Justice Manager</i> <i>Alhassan Sweirjo – SL MEAL Officer</i> <i>Marie Shawahina – Palestinian Livestock Development Centre (PLDC)</i> <i>Mohammed Hasasneh – Land Research Centre (LRC)</i>		
<b>Signed off by:</b>	<i>Shane Stevenson – Country Director</i>		
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### A. Context, Background and Findings

Oxfam GB’s Global Performance Framework is part of the organization’s effort to better understand and communicate its effectiveness, as well as enhance learning across the organization. Under this framework, a small number of completed or mature projects are selected each year for an evaluation of their impact, known as an ‘Effectiveness Review’.

#### Project Description

During the 2018/19 financial year, one of the projects selected for an Effectiveness Review was ‘From Emergency Food Security to Durable Livelihoods: Building Resilience in the Occupied Palestinian Territories’. This project was carried out in the West Bank, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, between November 2015 and January 2018 by Oxfam, together with two partners: the Land Research Centre (LRC) and the Palestinian Livestock Development Centre (PLDC).

The Bedouin people, historically pastoral and nomadic, lived in the Negev area at the creation of the state of Israel. The Jahalin Bedouin has since been displaced to the West Bank, around the illegal Israeli settlement of Ma’ale Adumim, and the Jordan Valley, and since 1967 has lived under the Israeli occupation. Following the Oslo II Agreement in 1995, the West Bank was divided into three different areas, A, B and C. The government of Israel maintains full military and civil control over Area C. In Area C, and close to East Jerusalem, the E1 area is home to Bedouin communities who are under threat of displacement because of Israeli plans for construction in the area. Bedouin communities in Area C, and in E1 in particular, have been under attack and threat of displacement for years. One way the threat materializes is through the continued issuance of evacuation, stop-work or demolition orders against specific constructions or areas, such as rangelands, issued by the Israel Defence Force and Israel Civil Administration (ICA), some of which leads to actual demolition and displacement (see OCHA (2016)).



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This project was funded by the Belgian Cooperation, through Oxfam Italy. Acknowledging that Bedouin communities are facing an enduring and structural emergency that gradually deteriorates their livelihoods, the project aimed to manage the humanitarian emergency in these communities and build different protection mechanisms as a way to build resilience. In particular, the focus was placed on improving access to veterinary services, creating, or supporting the strengthening of, legal protection (sub-)committees, and rehabilitating protected rangeland. This last component was particularly challenging because of an eviction order having been issued by the ICA against some of the rehabilitated protected rangelands (287 dunums). The combination of these components is the focus of this review. A fourth component consisted of engaging key international stakeholders in challenging Israeli policies that are in violation of international humanitarian law. This joint effort around specific cases will fall outside the scope of this review.

### Evaluation Approach

The Effectiveness Review, for which the fieldwork was carried out in November and December 2018, aimed to evaluate the success of the project in building resilience capacities. A quasi-experimental impact evaluation design was used to measure the effect that is causally attributable to – and representative of – the project’s cross-sectoral intervention. The evaluation design relied on comparing community members of the communities involved in the project with members of Bedouin communities from nearby areas who are thought to have had similar characteristics to the communities that participated in the project before the project was carried out. Thus 19 comparable Bedouin communities at similar ‘risk of forced displacement due to a relocation plan advanced by the Israeli authorities in recent years’, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), were identified and took part in the survey.

In both intervention and comparison communities, all households were asked to take part in the survey, if they so wished. Within each household, the survey protocol focused on interviewing the household head or spouse(s) and we introduced variation as per whether a man or a woman was interviewed within each household. The survey was composed of an individual module and a household one. In total 683 surveys were carried out in 30 communities, 268 in the intervention group and 415 in the comparison group. Half the respondents were women, and half men. Community leaders were also interviewed using a short community-level questionnaire.

To provide additional confidence when estimating the project’s impact the statistical tools of propensity-score matching and multivariate regression were used at the analysis stage to control for demographic and baseline differences between the households and individuals surveyed in the intervention and comparison communities. Resilience was assessed through examining 26 characteristics that are thought to be associated with the capacities to absorb, adapt or transform. A list of the resilience indicators, their distribution per capacity, and a breakdown of the results for each is shown in Table 1. Multi-dimensional indices of resilience and of resilience capacities were developed at the individual level, taking into account household-level characteristics, individual-level characteristics and intra-household dynamics (through involvement of different individuals in decision-making processes and access to resources).



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## Results

The review investigated the impact of community-, household- and individual-level activities on the resilience capacities of women and men. While the review draws from Oxfam's framework for resilient development, and in particular *The Future is a Choice* (Jeans *et al.*, 2016) and the *Gender Justice in Resilience* guidelines (Sotelo Reyes, 2017), the project was developed before the publication of these frameworks, and its design focuses on improving protection around three key areas at community level: supporting animal health, rehabilitating protected rangelands and strengthening community-based legal protection mechanisms. The review investigates the impact of this cross-sectorial approach.

### **Supporting animal health: gendered participation in activities, limited impact on access to veterinary services and impact on sheep vaccination rates**

As a result of the project, in the last three years more men have received training or information on animal health (up from 6 to 12 percent, difference significant at 10 percent). This is not the case among women. While we observed no impact of the project among women respondents on knowledge of animal health, we consistently observed a positive impact among men respondents. This reflects the gender norms in Bedouin society at the time of the review: men are considered responsible for livestock and livestock health expenditure, and women's mobility and participation in community events organized by external actors are restricted, which led to men being the voluntary participants of veterinary training in the setting of this project. Specific strategies would have to have been deployed to involve women in such training, and that would require a better understanding of gender roles in livestock care.

Overall, in the intervention group in 2017 and in 2018, a year after the end of the project, almost two thirds of the respondents had livestock, and slightly more than half had access to veterinary services for their animals. According to men respondents, the project improved the share of respondents having access to veterinary services in 2017 significantly. Access to veterinary services in 2018 was not impacted by the project. At the time of the survey rates of vaccination were high in both groups, and we measured a significant impact of the project on vaccination for sheep only (vaccinated in the last 12 months). Note that the project focused on three vaccines, and the review did not go into the details of the different vaccines. However, sustained vaccination behaviours are critical for vaccines to have a long-term impact.

### **Rehabilitation of protected rangelands: a challenging implementation**

The land rehabilitation component of the project, which focused on a few communities, was challenging: while the project led to the rehabilitation of a total of 432 dunums of protected rangeland, the Israeli Civil Administration issued an eviction order against 287 dunums, and the protected rangeland of one community had to be unfenced as a result. We did not measure significant impact of the project on home-production of fodder or on usage of water harvesting for animals or access to grazing areas.



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**Strengthening community-based legal protection mechanisms: low and selected participation and negative impact on knowledge of rights**

As a result of the project, respondents are significantly more aware of the existence of protection committees or sub-committees, and more likely to participate in such (sub-)committees. These effects are stronger for men than for women. Note that overall, and on average, the share of respondents participating in such (sub-) committees is low – 11 percent. These effects are driven by two communities in which the protection committees were formalized as part of this project, these two communities are also facing a particularly strong threat of displacement. In December 2017, some community members were invited to participate in training on their rights and legal procedures, and the project team paid specific attention to inviting women.

The project was successful in improving access to training, or to information on rights, or ways to document land usage among men, but not among women. In the intervention group, the respondents who recalled having participated in such training were more likely to be already involved in community groups in 2015. Both the impact result among women and the characteristics of those who recalled accessing training or information raise questions around the targeting of this activity, bearing in mind the project resource constraints. Moving forward, how could the participation of community members who are not already involved in community institutions be facilitated? And in a setting where gender norms constrain women's participation in public meetings, how could their participation be facilitated?

The project did not have a measurable impact on the knowledge of legal procedures. Men tend to have a better knowledge of both legal procedures and their rights than women. The project seems to have had a negative effect on knowledge of their rights, for both women and men. This effect is reduced when excluding two specific communities facing a particularly high threat of demolition and displacement (the project supported these communities through the creation of community protection committees). Hence, one hypothesis is that in spite of information and training received a year ago by a group of community members about international law, rights and documentation of land usage to protect their rights, the daily pressure and threat experienced by the people in the E1 area, compared to other communities at risk of displacement, seems to affect their belief in their rights and Israel's rights.

**Building resilience: no significant impact on resilience capacities overall**

Overall, there is no evidence of the project having had a significant impact on resilience, assessed through a multi-dimensional index reflecting the three capacities of resilience. We measured an impact of the project on transformative capacity (significant at 5 percent), driven by a change in belief in collective action's effectiveness. Note that women score significantly lower than men on the resilience indices (the overall resilience index and each capacity index).

On the absorptive capacity, while there is no clear evidence of impact, the project seems to have had an impact on a few indicators. Indeed, a greater proportion of intervention respondents had confidence that the community would be able to protect itself in the case of a demolition or stop-work order being issued. However, as mentioned above, we observed a negative impact on respondents' knowledge of their rights as Bedouin living in the West Bank. In addition, we observed an impact on one characteristic that is not related to the project logic. We measured a significant impact of the project on social support networks, with a greater proportion of respondents in the intervention areas reporting either giving or receiving financial



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support from other households in the community at least twice during the previous 12 months than in the comparison areas. Such impact was not anticipated. There is no clear evidence of the project building access to improved water sources, which were available all year round (and intervention and comparison groups were very different in terms of access to piped water on premises in 2015). There is no clear evidence of the project building access to remittances (which is also a characteristic of adaptive capacity). No measurable impacts were observed on livestock vaccination, income diversification, access to drinking water, access to agricultural or grazing land (also considered an indicator of transformative capacity), knowledge of legal procedures, and knowledge of animal health.

As mentioned above, there is no evidence of the project building adaptive capacity, or individual characteristics of adaptive capacity: ownership of fungible livestock, productive asset ownership, access to improved sources of water for cultivation or livestock, dietary diversity, control over the decision to sell livestock, availability of food, and attitude towards change. However, among women, we observed an impact on 'understanding of climate change', which was not anticipated as part of the project logic.

The overall impact on transformative capacity is driven by a significant impact of the project on belief in collective action's effectiveness, observed among both women and men respondents. While there is no evidence of impact of the project on women's participation in community groups, a significant and positive impact is observed among men. On the contrary, we observed a positive impact of the project among women on the political role of women. Such impact was not anticipated as part of the project logic. There is no clear evidence of the project having an impact on education of children. In addition, there were no significant differences detected between the intervention and comparison groups on the other characteristics of transformative capacity: ability to take decisions for one's own movement and participation in community activities, control over income from activities one participates in, and opinion on the acceptability of violence inside the household.

**Relationship between Oxfam, partners and project participants: involvement throughout the project cycle, feedback and confidentiality**

Finally, this review was also an opportunity for community leaders and survey participants to share feedback. While the former was formalized through a community form, the latter was informal, and shared with the survey team. Looking forward, community leaders highlighted the need for electricity and water services. In hindsight, however, feedback from community members stressed the lack of clarity on the project design and implementation, including on the prioritization and choices made because of resource constraints, while having high expectations because of participatory needs assessments and the high threat level and needs faced. Feedback also stressed a lack of clarity on the channels available to contact Oxfam staff. Finally, confidentiality of the data shared throughout the project, from needs assessment to this review, was a concern of respondents because of security reasons. Hence another key result of this Effectiveness Review is the need for Oxfam to review its ways of working with Bedouin community members in the West Bank. From a resilience perspective in particular, working with community members in ways that are empowering is indeed critical in order to move from dependencies to capacities.



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

**1. 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?**

The Effectiveness Review was designed well where the design team made sure the effective engagement of the program country team. The review was conducted by a professional team including a local consultancy team who gathered information directly from the communities. Oxfam Country office reviewed and agrees with these findings, taking into consideration that since May 2017 Oxfam became One Oxfam in OPTI so there is good progress in enhancing the quality of its programs. At this stage Oxfam clearly succeeded in developing its Gender Program which is well integrated now with the other two programs in country, Economic Justice and Saving Lives. For example, Oxfam has adopted its global “minimum standards of gender mainstreaming in humanitarian work” which is a guidance document in line with global SPHERE standards. Approaches such as “gender transformative leadership” and “positive masculinities” are also part of Oxfam and its partners’ work going forward.

In 2018/2019, Oxfam also developed its accountability mechanism following Oxfam’s global accountability standards and practices in line with the core humanitarian standards. The mechanism ensures that beneficiaries are able to provide feedback and complaints through Oxfam’s feedback mechanism titled ‘Your Word Counts’. The system uses Information Communication Technology (ICT) to record feedback or complaints received either online, through verbal feedback or through other channels such as hotlines. The system automatically refers feedback received to relevant program staff and is monitored by Oxfam’s partner staff. The system has been launched, tested and applied in Gaza. Oxfam is working on replicating the system in the West Bank during this year.

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

The results highlight the need to place a gender and power analysis at the heart of the development of the most appropriate mechanisms to foster participation of women in different positions of power within the community, as well as of community members who are further away from community institutions or more marginalized. Considering the already established capacities in the country and the integration enhanced between the Gender Program and the other programs in the country, Oxfam will pay more attention to the gender norms, roles and power analysis as a core of any programme design in future. Oxfam will also make sure a proper monitoring system is put in place to systematically capture the extent of women’s participation in the project implementation.

Oxfam’s Program team needs to better understand the three capacities of resilience according to Oxfam Global Resilience Framework. A learning event could help in contextualizing the understanding of the three capacities upon the context of Area C and the Palestinian Bedouin communities.

A participatory need assessment is key in understanding the needs of the community targeted. Oxfam will make sure to adopt a participatory need assessment as a main tool to be used when developing new projects. Attention to inclusion of a variety of community members in these processes will be critical,

especially inclusion of community members who usually have less say (using a gender and power lens). When relevant, Oxfam will develop a project steering committee that ensures the representation of different community groups in the decision making and monitoring of project activities. Going forward, conflict sensitive analyses will also be conducting when a new project is developed. The results highlighted the need to enhance the accountability and feedback mechanisms of Oxfam programs in OPTI thus Oxfam needs to strengthen the involvement of community members as well as leaders at programme design stage. Feedback mechanisms should be developed and integrated into programme implementation and monitoring. Oxfam's MEAL team needs to develop actions that ensure a safe and effective feedback mechanism is in place during the implementation of the projects.

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

Oxfam country office would require further support in three different areas:

- Having the project implementation team left, also having this comprehensive Review, the Country Program team would like to arrange a learning workshop where the Review Team can present the methodology, main findings and recommendations.
- The methodology followed is really interesting and we believe we at the country level have not been exposed to it in the past. A specific induction session to the three MEAL officers will help in better understanding this methodology so we could use to assess the impact of other programs in OPTI.
- The project was implemented before the finalization of Oxfam Global Resilience Framework and the review revealed the need to better understand this Framework at country level. The Country office would therefore like to get a specific session that helps in explaining the Framework to the Country Program teams.

**4. Any additional reflections that have emerged from the review process.**

The project was implemented between 2015 and 2018, years before applying the One Oxfam approach. The project was also designed as a standalone project which has been implemented as a legacy project by one affiliate in the country. Since May 2017, Oxfam in OPTI became One Oxfam where all available resources and expertise were put in one pool to introduce higher quality programs. That helped the country team in developing more integrated and solid programs including gender aspects.

The Project Review took place in 2018/2019 when all the project team left Oxfam. Due to this absence of Oxfam's implementing team, the country team was represented by the existing humanitarian team in addition to the partner staff who made themselves available during the Review. Oxfam recently made further efforts to develop it's understanding of resilience. Oxfam's Resilience Framework -composed of absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities- was finalized and published after this project started.

Unfortunately, the program team had no exposure to this global framework during the design or in the implementation phase.