



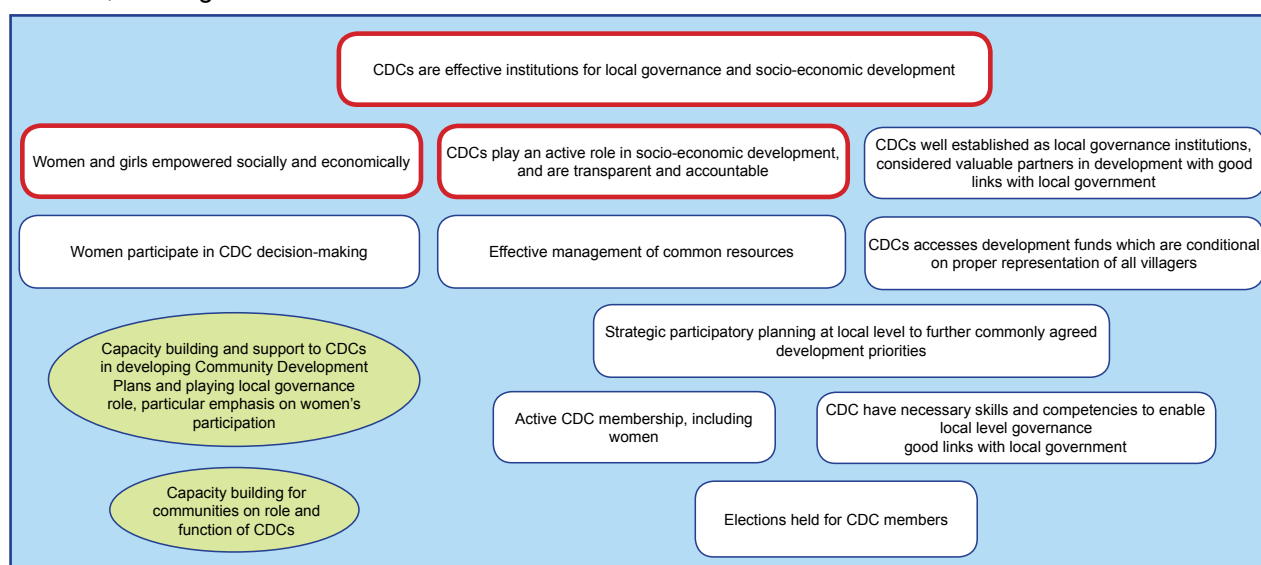
Afghanistan

Citizen Voice

2014/15

National Solidarity Programme III

The National Solidarity Programme III (NSP III) was launched in 2003 by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. Called “the largest people’s project in the history of Afghanistan”, and is funded by diverse international donors, including the World Bank. The main objective of the NSP is “to build, strengthen and maintain community development councils (CDCs) as effective institutions for local governance and socio- economic development”. Fully materialised, this would represent a major change in the way the Afghan rural communities approach their development. The NSP cycle starts with local elections to select CDCs members, Comprehensive training modules are delivered by Facilitating Partners (FPs), designed to build the capacity of CDCs and enable them to define their own developmental priorities, access funds and implement the corresponding projects (mostly infrastructural). Concurrently, local communities are trained to monitor and evaluate projects. Oxfam has been working in Daikundi province as the FP since 2003, and started supporting the implementation of the NSP III (the focus for this evaluation) in June 2010, working with 224 CDCs in five districts of Daikundi .



This diagram presents the theory of how the NSP programme was expected to achieve change. It demonstrates activities and outcomes that were expected to contribute to the overall goal of the project. The overall project goal, and outcomes assessed during the review are outlined in red.

Project date: October 2010 - March 2014




Evaluation: December 2014








Publication: September 2016

Evaluation Design

The evaluation focused on two key interim outcomes that the project sought to achieve, and exploited the phased approach to programme implementation in order to mimic counterfactual analysis by comparing governance outcomes in those communities which only recently (2014) entered into the NSP and those who started in 2010 and who have now completed the NSP intervention in order to consider the impact of the project. For details on evaluation design, see the full report.

Results

Project outcome	Rating	Commentary
Final outcome: Community Development Councils are effective institutions for local governance and socio-economic development		The sheer scale of the National Solidarity Programme means that it is unrivalled in its contribution to building, strengthening and maintaining the Community Development Councils as the effective institutions for local governance and socio-economic development.
Intermediate Outcome 1: Community Development Councils play active role in socio-economic development		Summing up, the evaluation found Community Development Councils play the active role in socio-economic development and there is evidence that the National Solidarity Programme intervention made a crucial contribution to achieving this impact (average score out of all contributing factors is equal to 3.7)
Intermediate Outcome 2: Women and girls empowered socially and economically		The evaluation found strong evidences that the National Solidarity Programme set foundation for women's involvement in Community Development Councils. Without the Community Development Councils, women would - most probably - still be out of governing structures. Although National Solidarity Programme documents only vaguely mention the participation of "both men and women", gender is an important element of the Oxfam Programme.

Rating key:  - Outcome realised in full; evidence that intervention made a crucial contribution;  - Outcome realised in part & evidence that intervention made a crucial contribution;  - Outcome realised in full & evidence that intervention made an important contribution;  - Outcome realised in part & evidence that intervention made an important contribution;  - Outcome realised in part & evidence that intervention made some contribution;  - Outcome realised to a small degree & evidence that intervention made an important contribution;  - Outcome realised, to any degree, but no evidence that the intervention made any contribution

It is important to understand that the NSP is a large government run programme, for which Oxfam has been a Facilitation Partner. The NSP structure does not leave FPs any discretion in terms of its implementation, and it was not always straightforward to draw out Oxfam's distinctive contribution, although the evaluation was able to identify a few areas where Oxfam clearly added value. For example, the evaluation found evidence that Oxfam's facilitation has improved the linkages of the CDCs, paying special attention to creating linkages between the communities and developmental partners, including the government. This task is poorly described in the NSP Operational Manual (OM) and the approach used is likely Oxfam's value-added. Another area where Oxfam made a distinct contribution was around gender mainstreaming, helping the MRRD in developing Annex K (Gender) to the OM, and building linkages with high-profile local women to serve as the role models.

Going forward

Oxfam Afghanistan has decided to engage with the design of the next phase of the NSP programme. It appears that NSP will now be changed to a new programme called Citizen Charter. The roles and responsibilities of the Facilitating Partner (such as Oxfam) under the new programme are not yet clear. Oxfam will also continue to stress the importance of ensuring genuine participation of women in decision-making at community levels. In response to the findings of the evaluation, Oxfam is committed to collecting additional data – beyond that currently required by the programme – and will integrate lessons learnt from its other programming in this context, in order to influence the design of the new Citizen Charter programme to ensure that women's role in decision-making at community and CDC levels are a critical component of the new programme. In the meantime, the Oxfam Afghanistan team has already planned to conduct more gender training for various CDCs, as per the request from the project's programme management unit, and as identified in this review.

Photo: Dr Kinga Komorowska