Impact Evaluation:
Experiences from Oxfam America

Allison Davis, Research and Evaluation Advisor
A Key Evaluation Design Challenge:

• Coalitions and networks are increasing
• Oxfam: complex long term programs
• How to tackle evaluation at this level?
• How to approach attribution and contribution?
# Oxfam America: Major Lines of Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Some Evaluation Considerations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humanitarian response and preparedness</strong></td>
<td>Relief, Reconstruction and Disaster Risk Reduction</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Long Term Development Programming</strong></td>
<td>Work at multiple levels towards 10+ year impact goal for defined population</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>US and Global Advocacy and Campaigning</strong></td>
<td>Targets change in policies and behaviors (institutional, consumer behavior etc)</td>
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<td><strong>Innovation Projects</strong></td>
<td>Model held fairly constant, scales horizontally</td>
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Oxfam’s Long Term Programs

• 10 year + commitment
• Multiple types of work and multiple scales
• Coordinated in coalition
• Advocacy always an element
• Community involvement key
# Key elements of Impact Evaluation

## (1) Collective sense-making of impact data

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Audience:</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
<th>Insights</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project/ Program working group, local stakeholders, Senior Program Management</td>
<td>Multi-stakeholder, real-time learning, improvement. Shared understanding, program adjustments</td>
<td>Multiple, debated perspectives on changes happening and actions to take. Multi-stakeholder consensus on significance.</td>
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## (2) External impact evaluation

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<td>Program working group, local stakeholders, management and executive leadership, OA Board and the public</td>
<td>Periodic, external, expert perspectives on changes, in-depth exploration and accountability.</td>
<td>Methodologically-based perspective on changes happening and expert perspective on significance.</td>
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Example: The Program to Prevent Gender Based Violence in El Salvador
Theory of Change
Gender-Violence Prevention Program

**LEVEL**

- **Regional**
  - “Opportunity structure” (New legislation, national school curriculum, municipal prevention policies, plans)

- **National**
  - “Social relations and behavior” (application of law, attitudes and behaviors in youth and key actors, municipalities taking action)

- **Local**
  - “Wellbeing and Agency”: Increase knowledge of women, ensure women benefit from prevention efforts; help women, youth and allies influence decision makers, drive change.

**TIME:**

- 3-5
- 5-7
- 10-15
El Salvador – Research Design

- Prevention actions by the municipal government
- Perceptions of safety
- Women’s confidence in efforts to address the GBV
- National policies advocated by the campaign
- Better mechanisms for civil society to influence prevention policy

Location of case studies
Process Principles

• Multi-disciplinary team
• Regionally based research institution
• Collaborative: design consultation, finding validation

Methodological Approach

• In depth comparative case studies
• Major cross-stakeholder document synthesis
• Interviews on effectiveness of advocacy choices
Questions of Attribution and Contribution

• **Attribution** – studied more at outcome level (project evaluation, campaign evaluation)

• **Program Level = Contribution**
  – *Using component project data*
  – *Selection of case studies*
    • *Using comparison case(s)*
    • *Within case sampling*
  – *Tracing influence pathways*
Challenges

– Could case study selection drive program choices?

– Favoring program wide evaluation at the expense of outcome (project) level impact evaluation?

– Staff cost in finding and coordinating interdisciplinary teams

– Finding experts with credibility to both coalitions and outside readers
Impact Evaluation: Complex Coalitions for Long Term Change

- Collaborative process
- Design tests theory
- In depth comparative case studies
- Contribution tracing
- Synthesis
THANK YOU