getting Oxfam GB’s effectiveness Reviews to lead to more effective programming

InterAction Webinar on Promoting Evaluation Use

Karl Hughes
Program Effectiveness Lead
November 28 2012
## PRESENTATION OUTLINE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part A: Oxfam’s Effectiveness Reviews</th>
<th>• What are they for and how do they work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Part B: Increasing the Likelihood of Use</td>
<td>• Efforts to ensure ERs inform decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part C: Reality check on actual use</td>
<td>• Positive and negative examples from the field/HQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part D: Going forward</td>
<td>• Additional strategies to facilitate use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART A: OXFAM GB’S EFFECTIVENESS REVIEWS

SUMMARY OF 2011/12 FINDINGS AND KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Twenty-six of Oxfam GB’s projects were randomly selected and evaluated in 2011/12 under six thematic areas: humanitarian support, adaptation and risk reduction, livelihoods, women’s empowerment, citizen voice, and policy influencing. While the sample of projects is too small to make broad generalisations about our overall effectiveness, the results for this particular cohort of projects are mixed. In general, the results for most projects are positive in some areas and negative in others. In addition, there is evidence of significant impact for several of the projects (for example, the Pakistan Disaster Risk Management and Livelihoods Programme and the Indonesian Sustainable Rural Livelihoods Campaign) and no evidence of impact for others (for example, the Mali Cotton Programme and the northern Karanja Development Project).

Again, given the small samples of projects reviewed under each thematic area, it is not possible to draw out general thematic lessons. Nevertheless, there are a few observations that can be made:

- **Humanitarian assistance**: The projects demonstrated a strong capacity to respond to emergency situations.
- **Adaptation and risk reduction**: Projects focused on reducing the impact of natural disasters and climate change.
- **Livelihoods support**: Projects aimed at improving the economic conditions of communities.
- **Women’s empowerment**: Projects helped to increase the participation of women in decision-making processes.
- **Citizen voice**: Projects encouraged community engagement and feedback mechanisms.
- **Policy influencing**: Projects worked to influence policy and decision-making processes at various levels.

Figure 1: Location of project effectiveness reviews, by thematic area, 2011/12

© Oxfam GB 2012

Printed in the UK
ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

55 countries with
≈ 250 programs &
1,200 projects
operating at any
given time

Multiple
thematic
areas

Senior Mgt.
desire for
immediate
effectiveness
feedback

Various
intervention
approaches

Limited
capacity for
rigorous
evaluation
A NEGOTIATED COMPROMISE

Senior Mgt. push: global outcome indicators for all country programs

Technical push back: resource, time intensive & unfit for purpose

Compromise: collect output data on all projects & evaluate random sample of “mature” projects as rigorously as possible within existing resource constraints
WHY RANDOM SELECTION & WHY PROJECTS IN MATURE PHASES?

• To get a better sense of the organization’s true effectiveness

Avoid “cherry picking” flag ship programs, etc.

Selection from baseline = more rigorous design, but ↑ likelihood of biased attention to project
## APPROACHES USED:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic area</th>
<th>Humanitarian</th>
<th>Community Development</th>
<th>Citizen Voice/ Policy Influencing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core focus</td>
<td>Adherence to quality standards</td>
<td>Change at individual/household level</td>
<td>Change in policy and/or duty bearer practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core method</td>
<td>Documentation review &amp; key informant interviews</td>
<td>Comparison of project and non-project groups using advanced statistical methods</td>
<td>Evidencing the extent outcome change has taken place &amp; the factors responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducted by</td>
<td>External humanitarian consultants</td>
<td>Oxfam GB HQ quant. advisers with national consultants</td>
<td>External qualitative researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># carried out in 2011/12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART B: MEASURES TAKEN TO PROMOTE USE OF EFFECTIVENESS REVIEW FINDINGS
1. ATTEMPTS MADE TO INVOLVE PROGRAM TEAMS & PARTNERS IN THE PROCESS

Why do we need a comparison group?

Comparison village

Intervention village

Project Intervention Logic

Increased household income

Increased agricultural profits

Market research & advisory support

Agricultural extension, training, & revolving fund

Increased crop production & diversification

Availability food crops throughout the year

Improved household food security

Increased household income

Increased agricultural profits

Market research & advisory support

Agricultural extension, training, & revolving fund

Increased crop production & diversification

Availability food crops throughout the year

Improved household food security
2. ERS IMBEDDED IN MANAGEMENT LINE

- International Director
- Regional Director
- Country Director
- Programme Team
3. MANAGEMENT RESPONSE SYSTEM
OVERSEEN BY INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

Effectiveness Review carried out by PPAT
In-country debrief following ER fieldwork
Analysis and Draft Report shared with Country Team
PPAT and Project team feedback session on findings
Final Report completed
PPAT sends Management Response (MR) Forms to International Director (ID)
ID sends MR to Regional Director/Country Director
Country Team & Partners ER Workshop: Responds to findings & Programme Learning Considerations and completes MR
Regional Director send Management Response to ID
Follow Up CD-DRD 1:1s
MR and Final report published

ID-RD 1:1s, Programme Dialogues & visits
Follow up action Region & Country Team
Follow-up actions by Humanitarian Director & Advisors
OI Country Management Team

PPAT Monitor ER learning & progress. Create database & generates syntheses of findings

Learning & global management mechanisms:
CMT, OI PGG, Council Trustees, Country & Regional Learning Reviews & QMR

Follow up and Learning
4. SHORTER, LESS TECHNICAL REPORTS CREATED AND TRAFFIC LIGHTS USED
5. PLANNED EFFORTS TO DRILL DOWN ON SURPRISING/UNEXPECTED RESULTS WITH QUALITATIVE METHODS
PART C: REALITY CHECK ON UPTAKE OF ER FINDINGS
POSITIVE EXAMPLES

We Can Campaign, Bangladesh:
- ↑ popular attitudes & ↓ reported intra-marital violence only in district with intense implementation
- Using findings to strengthen existing campaign & inform design of a new nation-wide popular mobilization campaign

Sustainable Livelihood Development in Lao Cai Province, Vietnam:
- No impact on agricultural production, income or food security
- Realization that negative result likely due to low intensity of project; more work in future on improving nutrition

Strengthening Civil Society for Change in Occupied Palestine
- Interventions not well joined up as part of a long-term strategy
- Undertaking action research with partners to develop a longer-term planning approach that is workable within the complex and dynamic context
NOT SO POSITIVE EXAMPLES

North Karamoja Development Project, Uganda:

- No impact on income, food security, self-reported agricultural production, etc.
- Findings not really accepted – belief that the results tainted by “strategic response bias” given culture of dependency among targeted population

Guatemala Highlands Value Chain Development Alliance:

- Positive results on women’s empowerment measures but not on livelihood measures
- Project selected too immature, so activities of older project looked at, but country team could still not accept findings. Program funding also wanted to discontinue fundraising for the newer project
SURPRISING & MIXED CASES

Enhancing Access and Control to Sustainable Livelihood Assets of the Manobo Tribe:

- Initial strong reluctance to engage with effectiveness review process
- Now interested in replicating the ER methodology on a completed project, as well as pursuit of difference-in-difference design for new big program

Programme Leadership Team Meeting:

- Used effectiveness reviews extensively to inform discussion/decisions – Good
- Took some of the findings out of context, as well interpretation and extrapolation problems – Not so good
PART D: GOING FORWARD
1. MAKE MEASUREMENT MORE INTUITIVE AND PROGRAMMATICALLY USEFUL

- Householder wealth status
- Basic needs
- Livelihood diversification
- Farming extension support
- Access to marking information & support
- Access to seasonal forecast information
- Access to disaster preparedness information
- Motivation to pursue alternative livelihood strategies
- Attitudes about climate change
- Credit access (formal and informal)
- Access to climate trend information
- Access to livelihood innovation support
- Social support system
- Gov. Support
- Savings
- Convertable assets
- Natural resource management practices
- Protection of assets
- Knowledge of disaster management plan
- Participation in flood preparation meetings
2. INTEGRATE EFFECTIVENESS REVIEWS WITH FINAL EVALUATIONS

Scope of final evaluation

Scope of effectiveness review
3. EXPANDED STAFF AND PARTNER TRAINING

How to develop a theory of change?
4. WORK TO BETTER ENSURE THAT INFLUENTIAL PROGRAM STAFF ARE INVOLVED IN PROCESS
5. MONITOR AND SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF MANAGEMENT RESPONSES
6. BETTER COMMUNICATE ER FINDINGS & MORE SYNTHESIS WITH INCREASING NUMBERS OF ERS