



# Evaluation of Community-Based Rural Livelihoods Programme in Badakhshan, Afghanistan

Full Report

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

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Evaluators: Kavita Gandhi and John Krijnen

**FIRST DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT  
OXFAM COMMUNITY-BASED RURAL LIVELIHOODS PROGRAMME BADAKHSHAN**

Kavita Gandhi

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John Krijnen

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**ii. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| AKDN   | Aga Khan Development Network                     |
| AKF    | Aga Khan Foundation                              |
| BDF    | Badakhshan Development Forum                     |
| CDC    | Community Development Councils                   |
| CHWS   | Community Health Workers                         |
| GTZ    | Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit       |
| IEC    | Information Education and Communication Material |
| M&E    | Monitoring and Evaluation                        |
| MoE    | Ministry of Education                            |
| MoH    | Ministry of Health                               |
| MoWA   | Ministry of Women Affairs                        |
| PRA    | Participatory Rural Appraisal                    |
| PTC    | Parent Teacher Committees                        |
| PTD    | Participatory Technology Development             |
| SDC    | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation     |
| SIB    | Shahr-I-Buzurg                                   |
| TBA    | Traditional Birth Attendants                     |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund                   |
| WFP    | World Food Programme                             |
| WHO    | World Health Organisation                        |

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Interactions with managers and staff of development agencies like Aga Khan Foundation, Afghan Aid, Concern and Badakshan Development Forum were valuable and helped the team put the findings in the overall development context of Afghanistan.

We are thankful to the translators who helped facilitate the discussions with communities, government officials and development agencies.

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not reflect those of the commissioning agencies SDC and Oxfam.

#### **iv. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Oxfam's Community-based Rural Livelihoods programme is a three-year's programme financed by the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, Oxfam GB, Oxfam America and Oxfam Australia. The programme seeks to reduce vulnerability of the poor through implementing an integrated programme focussing on livelihoods, health, education, gender and governance. As the programme is slated to end in September 2006, an external evaluation was commissioned to assess the impact of the programme, and to provide recommendations to shape the development of future interventions.

The programme has succeeded to establish itself in a remote area and has created substantial goodwill by responding to community needs and by compensating for government weakness in delivering basic services.

The programme has succeeded to positively influence attitudes and behaviour to girl's education, and public health practices. It has put the role of women in reproductive and productive tasks in the forefront and has succeeded in providing a platform for women to come together and discuss their issues and concerns.

Improvement in food and income security of the poor has been modest. Specific measures to target landless and marginal farmers and women are missing. The programme appears to be understaffed with regards to technical staff. The technical skills of the staff are not commensurate with the task at hand. Many innovative livelihood options are being tried out by organisations like AKF and Afghan Aid who create more space for participatory experimentation, and thereby failure and success, learning, and exposure to relevant experiences elsewhere in the mountainous area of Pakistan, Tajikistan and India. Oxfam is not taking advantage of these opportunities.

The institutional and financial sustainability of project activities shows a clear potential for improvement. Oxfam managed service delivery has prevailed over strengthening local institutions in management and funding capacities. Shuras are facilitating the delivery of the programme but have not been set up to be representative and accountable community institutions. In the last one-year the provincial and district governments have been elected and the process of preparation of provincial development plan was initiated. Oxfam is seen as being distant from this process. Project activities are largely subsidised. The role of private sector, government and payment for some services by communities has to be systematically worked out.

The evaluation team recommends for the extension of the programme by another two phases of three years each. This is fully justified by the extreme vulnerabilities in the remote mountain area of Badakhshan. This time frame will enable bringing lasting changes in poor peoples' lives. The present area coverage should be maintained instead of spreading relatively modest resources too thin. The sectoral focus should be on livelihoods, water and sanitation, governance with gender as a cross cutting issue. Oxfam should play the role of gap filling in addressing education and maternal and child health.

A next phase should emphasize capacity building in institutional development and organisational strengthening of community-based institutions and district government. Financial sustainability will be pursued through gradually phasing out from subsidies. At the same time self-help groups can be established geared towards community-based saving/credit schemes modestly financed with rotating funds. Moreover, private sector options need to be systematically explored. There is an opportunity to

more actively link up with the national decentralization effort and the provincial planning process in order to obtain the goodwill to pursue the own programme and to successfully lobby with donors to invest in the infrastructure development of the programme area.

The order of magnitude of funding could be somewhat increased to approximately US\$ 2 million for a future three-years phase, in order to enable subcontracting arrangements, the reinforcement of technical field staff and the establishment of a rotating fund for saving-credit purposes (replacing subsidies).

Technical support for the livelihood interventions in particular in livestock, horticulture and agriculture, should either be sub-contracted to specialized agencies through institutionalised partnerships or appropriately qualified technical people should be recruited by Oxfam. The number of field staff i.e. community organisers and technical staff should be increased.

SDC and Oxfam should lobby with major players in the health and education sectors to step up their investments in the area. Lobbying is also needed with regards to the improvement of the main roads connecting the district headquarters with the inter-provincial road.

Last but not the least, it is recommended that adequate time and resources be invested in designing the next phase of the programme. The programme development should be based on a detailed analysis of livelihood strategies, assets, threats and vulnerabilities for different socio economic and vulnerable groups. Historical analysis of livelihoods in Badakshan should be carried out to understand the type of livelihoods that can be promoted in this food deficit region characterised by hostile terrain, harsh winters, poor water availability and soil conditions. It is recommended that with support of SDC and AKF, Oxfam will orient itself towards livelihood options as successfully developed in comparable agro-ecological zones in Afghanistan and in the region. A baseline needs to be developed for monitoring changes incorporating quantitative and qualitative changes in people's lives.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Oxfam GB initiated the implementation of a three-year Community-based Rural Livelihoods programme in Shahr-I-Buzurg and Yawan<sup>1</sup> Districts of Badakshan province.

The programme seeks to reduce vulnerability of the poor through implementing an integrated programme focussing on livelihoods, health, education, gender and governance. The programme is financed by Oxfam GB, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation, Oxfam America and Oxfam Australia and is slated to end in September 2006. An external evaluation was commissioned to assess the impact of the programme, and to provide recommendations to shape the development of future interventions. (See Annex 1 for the TOR for the evaluation).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

A range of background documents regarding the programme was studied. These include the needs assessment, programme proposal, yearly progress reports, and internal Monitoring and Evaluation reports. (Please refer to Annex 3 for a comprehensive list of documents examined by the review team).

Formal and informal discussions were held with Oxfam Staff in the field, in Faizabad and in Kabul.

A total eight villages comprising 20% of the programme villages were visited. Due to social and cultural restrictions the team split into a men's and a women's team. The field visits took place over ten days. (Please refer to Annex 2 for more information on the mission schedule).

Meetings were conducted with men and women shuras (community institutions) to find out about the programme interventions and the changes they had brought about in their lives. Questions were put to Basic Veterinary Workers (BVWs), Para vets, Community Health Workers (CHWs), men and women Teachers about their work, achievements so far and challenges faced. Visits to kitchen gardens, dam sites, watersheds and schools were made to get a first hand view of the interventions.

The evaluation team met with NGOs working in Badakshan and Government Officials at the province and districts. (Refer to Annex 3 for detail on the persons contacted).

The evaluation faced two major challenges. First, lack of baseline and impact monitoring data, posed a big challenge in measuring changes in people's lives. Second, long travel time, remoteness of the programme villages and security conditions restricted the time available for interactions with communities.

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<sup>1</sup> The programme was to be implemented in Ragh District. The bifurcation of Ragh led to the creation of new districts and the programme villages fall in Yawan district now.

### **3. CONTEXT**

Afghanistan is emerging from the aftermath of thirty years of war and civil unrest and has extremely low levels of development.

Civil war and conflict have exacted a high price from the poor people. Vulnerability levels are high due to the prolonged conflict and disasters like earthquakes, floods, droughts and landslides.

Badakshan located in the north-eastern part of the country is one of the most remote and least developed provinces in Afghanistan. The terrain is mountainous, characterised by steep slopes and river valleys. The road infrastructure is poor and the common means of transportation is donkeys and horses. Many villages are cut off for 3-6 months in the winter. Forests and pastures have been decimated by war with consequent negative impacts such as soil erosion, disturbance of the hydrological balance and landslides. In this barren landscape one finds few patches of green, which are villages, located close to a water source.

The province scores low on human development indicators. Only 10% of the population in the entire province has access to clean drinking water, literacy rates are low and the province has the second highest maternal mortality rates in the world. Status of women is deplorable, caused by deeply rooted cultural and customary beliefs and practices. Practice of child marriage, frequent pregnancies and bigamy make life very difficult for women. Women do not own any assets and have limited mobility. They have absolutely no control over their lives and influence over decisions affecting their lives.

The major ethnic groups in this area are Tajiks whereas Ismailies are concentrated in specific districts. Small minorities of Uzbeks, Turkmen, Hazara, Kirghiz, Pashtun and Nuristani also live in this province. Livestock and income from migration within Afghanistan and to neighbouring countries of Iran and Pakistan are the two main livelihoods. Households have small lands dedicated to kitchen gardens and fruit orchards. Agriculture is mainly rainfed and productivity levels are low. Farmers grow wheat and barley which meets the food needs for a few months. This province has always been a food deficit area, relying on food transfer from other parts of Afghanistan.

### **4. FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Programme objectives**

##### **4.1.1 Expansion of livelihoods assets**

Oxfam has sought to strengthen livelihoods of the poor in a context wherein the existing knowledge base on successful interventions and technologies is limited. Basic information like average rainfall and snowmelt, land use data, information on agricultural and livestock production systems is not easily available. The outcomes of the interventions need to be analysed keeping this in mind.

*Demonstration Plots, Seed Banks and training to farmers:* Plots have been established to expose farmers to better practices for sowing, weeding, pest and disease control, and seed banks to ensure for improved wheat seeds and vegetable cultivation. A limited number of farmers have received training and have gone on exposure visits to other NGOs field areas.

The achievements have been mixed. While the wheat yields have increased in some villages (by 50-100% for irrigated and 10-20% on rainfed land), in others the yield of the improved seed variety are lower than that of the local seed. Farmers have also not adopted the advice. This could be indicative of a larger problems related to top-down transfer of knowledge to farmers. Approaches like participatory technology development and farmer field schools that have proved to be more effective, the world over, in development of agricultural knowledge should be adopted.

Another area of concern is that many of the poor are landless households<sup>2</sup> and it is not clear to what extent they have been able to rent land and benefit from this initiative. Further, droughts also pose a big challenge to the sustainability of seed banks, as farmers find it difficult to return the seed.

From a gender perspective, only men have learnt the new agricultural techniques, as women cannot visit the demonstration farms or go on exposure visits to other villages.

*Tree planting:* Improved varieties of fruit trees like pistachios, apricots and almonds and forest trees have been provided to farmers, schools and planted in the watershed protection sites. Farmers have paid only between 20 and 30% of the cost of saplings. There is need for a strategy to gradually phase out these subsidies.

*Kitchen Gardening:* This is an important activity in an area, which is remote and where the only source of vegetables, can be from ones own garden. The kitchen gardening project has led to a more varied diet. Women reported that earlier they were growing just onions and tomatoes in their garden but with the seeds provided by the programme they are now also getting pumpkins, cauliflower, cabbage, radishes, beetroot and pepper. Vegetables are dried and stored for use during the winter months. However, inequality in intra-household allocation of food remains an issue of concern.

Vegetable production is mainly for self-consumption and is sometimes shared with neighbours. In some villages the kitchen gardens receive water from the irrigation dams and in others women informed us that water shortages have had an adverse impact on productivity. The possibility of channelling wastewater used for bathing and cleaning of utensils to the kitchen gardens should be explored as a strategy to address the water shortage, as should rainwater harvesting.

Households, which have benefited from the kitchen gardening programme are those that already had a garden and access to water. In the programme it was envisaged that women would lease out community land for kitchen garden but this was dropped as the land available was rainfed and unsuitable for this activity. It's likely that working with those having a kitchen garden reflects a bias towards the better-off households in the village. While women mentioned that they share the vegetables with their neighbours, a strategy for ensuring the access of the poor landless households to green vegetables needs to be worked out.

*Soil and Water Conservation Measures:* Two watershed protection programmes have been developed, one in each district, to protect the villages against landslides. These watershed protection sites appear to be technically well laid out and have been appreciated by the community too. Given the large area

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<sup>2</sup> The baseline survey conducted in 2005 puts the figures for landless farmers as 28% and those having some land but also as sharecropping as 62%.

that requires soil and water conservation measures and tree planting these sites are rather small in size and it is difficult to imagine how their magnitude could be scaled up independently, because this requires huge investment.

*Irrigation:* About 90-95 % of the land in the area is rainfed. The programme has supported the construction of irrigation dams and canals to provide water to agriculture land and kitchen gardens. Irrigation canals and dams have provided water to some land but this is at a very modest level. An increase in irrigated area has led to doubling or tripling of agricultural yields. Certain men shuras report that poor people have been given priority in terms of access water.

*Livestock improvements (vaccinations, Para-vets, BVWs and cross-breeding):* According to interviews with men and women, the vaccination of big and small animals would have yielded good results. Both report a significant decline in mortality figures for livestock, which is an important asset in this marginal area.

Para-vets, as well as female and male BVWs have been trained to provide basic veterinary services and have been provided with a medicine kit. In an area where there were no veterinary services available earlier this intervention is highly appreciated. Female BVWs have been working for one month so it is difficult to gauge how effective they are in this role. Both men and women mentioned that there is no problem accepting women in the role of a BVW.

It has been extremely challenging to train female BVWs, as they are not allowed to go to the Oxfam Office in SIB to receive training from the male veterinarian. The problem has been solved by first training the female health promoter who in turn trains the BVWs. The BVWs are from landless households or widows, which is a good strategy.

The BVWs services are subsidised by Oxfam. Families pay only a portion of the cost of medicines and services.

*Cross breeding:* Improving the local cow breed through crossing with Jersey and Friesian Bulls is being tried to improve the milk yields. The first crossbred calves have been born but have not started giving milk. Therefore, it is too early to say whether the objective has been achieved. However, cows are reared in this region for multiple purposes: milk, meat, dung and animal traction. It needs to be examined whether the crossbred cows will be able to meet all these functions. Improving the breed of an area is a specialised task. Reasons why people rear the animal, its suitability to the region, availability of fodder, all need to be looked into before selecting the breed. A large majority of interviewed male shuras found the Friesian cows too heavy for breeding purposes. Project statistics showed a success rate in insemination of only one third and also the occurrence of abortions was considerable.

#### **4.1.2 Increased access to education**

*Raising awareness on education for boys and girls:* One of the biggest achievements of Oxfam's work is community demand for education of girls and boys. Women and men spoke about the importance of sending children to school. Education is seen as a way to progress in life. Women also view education as a means to help their daughters earn a living. More parents are sending children to school but the closure of the WFP-supported food for education programme has led to a fall in the attendance.

*Lobbying provincial and district government to establish more schools and recruit teachers:* Coordination with Department of Education has led to improved teacher training but not to more schools. Lack of budget with the provincial and district governments poses a big challenge to get more government support for school construction in the programme areas. Donors focussing on education should be lobbied for construction of schools.

*Provision of education:* Oxfam has constructed two schools as result of which 600 children are going to school. Since for cultural reasons parents are unwilling for their daughters above the age of ten to be taught by male teachers, eight female teachers have been hired from Faizabad to teach girl children. Parent Teacher Committees (PTCs) have been formed in many of the project villages. They are playing an important role in convincing families to send children to school and ensure that the teacher is present. A village could either have a men's or a women's PTC committee or both. These committees are currently not monitoring the quality of education, which needs to be addressed.

Oxfam has coordinated with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to provide training for teachers on teaching methodologies. Teaching material has been provided through linking up with UNICEF. The female teachers have yet to receive training due to lack of women trainers to train them.

*Public health and hygiene classes in schools:* Oxfam health promoters are conducting sanitation and personal hygiene classes in the schools. This has been made possible through requesting the MoE to allocate time to allow Oxfam staff to hold these sessions. Strategies like celebration of Children's Day and organising quizzes and drawing competitions on health and hygiene could be good ways to motivate children.

#### **4.1.3 Safe public and environmental health practices**

Provision of safe drinking water has been one of the major achievements under this objective. Construction of drinking water facilities has drastically reduced the amount of time spent by women and children in collection of water. However, water management systems are weak and need strengthening.

Efforts have also been made to bring about behavioural change in personal hygiene and sanitation. Oxfam staff has received training in personal hygiene and environmental health. Good IEC material is available with the health promoters for communicating information to women and men. Both men and women make the link between health and hygiene and report that the incidence of sickness has reduced. A lack of baseline data makes it difficult to say by how much morbidity has reduced. From general observation it appears that some impact has been made in terms of changing attitudes and behaviour. The people appeared to be relatively clean, no garbage was strewn in the streets and the individual houses were quite clean. That being said, there is still much ground which remains to be covered. The availability of safe water determines the extent to which the public health messages can lead to actual change.

Although the programme focuses on preventive aspects there is a demand from communities for curative health services through the provision of medicines to health workers and the construction of clinics. Poor health infrastructure and limited presence of other development agencies in these two districts make communities look to Oxfam to fulfil their needs.

To ensure referral services Oxfam has coordinated with the WHO, the MoH and other NGOs for the establishment of health infrastructure. The coordination with WHO resulted in a Tuberculosis Treatment Centre in SIB. The problem of shortage of medicine and lack of a qualified doctor for the health clinic in SIB was discussed with the Director of Public Health at Faizabad. Shortly thereafter, a doctor was assigned to the health clinic in SIB. Meetings with the MoH and other NGOs regarding the need for health infrastructure resulted in the construction of two clinics by Merlin.

#### **4.1.4 Reduction in maternal mortality and infant mortality rates**

Instead of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs), Community Health Workers (CHWs) have been trained. They support the health promoter in communicating messages on public health and work with expectant mothers to ensure sanitary environment and delivery practices. Some of the women CHWs have received training to assist women in child delivery. Health promoters too have meetings with girls and women on reproductive health issues.

Women shuras too are playing a major role in influencing safe delivery and preventing infant deaths. Women and men have understood the damage caused by early marriage. They are able to link early marriage to complications in pregnancies. Women report that they have been successful in stopping child marriage. The age at marriage has increased from 10-12 years to 18-20 years. Women shuras talk to expectant women about delivering their child in a clinic. In some cases when family members oppose this, women shuras coordinate with men shuras to convince them. Information about vaccination during pregnancy and in the first few years of a child's life is also shared widely.

The strategy of ensuring safe delivery in a clinic will work in villages that are close to the District Centre, which has one. In far-off villages, which are 5-10 hrs horse ride, this strategy may not work. The effectiveness of CHWs in assisting with delivery is not known due to lack of data.

#### **4.1.5 Changes in gender relations**

Oxfam's commitment to gender is visible in the special efforts to recruit and retain women staff. To reach out to women in a segregated society the strategy of employing a husband and wife as social organiser and health promoter has been adopted. This allows women to work and travel in this traditional society. Childcare allowance helps women with children to work. A gender officer is appointed for Badakshan who works along with the Gender Advisor in Kabul. Most of the staff has undergone gender sensitisation training.

The constitution of women shuras is an important step in providing women a say in decision making in private and public spheres. Women mention that by coming to the shura meetings they have developed the ability to put forth their issues and concerns. It has helped build their confidence and self-esteem.

A women shura is a group of 5-8 women in a village who come together on a regular basis once or twice a month. Apart from shura members other women in the village too attend the meetings. The meeting is a platform wherein Oxfam shares information on health and hygiene, importance of education and consults women about the interventions to be carried out in the village. Women shuras

currently play a role in ensuring safe delivery, stopping child marriage and resolving fights between women.

Women shared that they have started having some say in the decision making in the household especially related to stopping of child marriage. Women shuras have also played a role in ensuring that there are fewer home deliveries and that babies are born in a clinic. Women shuras have been consulted in the siting of water points.

Women are being trained as BVWs. The strategy is to prove that women can perform technical roles thus challenging the traditional stereotypical image of women as a mother and wife. The BVWs in SIB have been working for the last one-month only so one needs to wait and watch their acceptance by the society. Both men and women say gender will not be a barrier in treating the animals.

Families have started valuing education and want their daughters to be educated. Literacy classes have been started but the education qualifications of the teachers are low, given the difficulty of finding educated women in the villages. The issue whether a sixth grade can teach others, needs to be carefully examined. It is not clear what role the literacy classes can play beyond providing basic literacy. There are very few secondary schools in the area. The literacy classes can be developed as functional literacy centres wherein the girls apart from learning how to read and write and arithmetic also read books and pamphlets related to agriculture, forestry, water etc. The women literacy classes should also be developed as spaces wherein adolescent girl issues and rights are discussed.

Demand for an income generation activity was raised in many of the meetings with men and women shuras. Women want to contribute economically to the family and also see this as important to raise their status in the household.

Generation of demand for literacy classes, acceptability of women Basic Veterinary Workers, allowing male to teach the girls in some of the villages, celebration of Women's Day all indicate the progress made towards improving the lives of women. These are the result of sensitisation work undertaken by Oxfam with women and men in these villages.

The main challenge faced in ensuring that women actively participate and benefit from this programme is the restriction placed on mobility and interactions with men outside the family. Training of literacy class teachers and BVWs had to be provided in the village itself and that too by women due to cultural traditions. Efforts to work with mullahs, who are the opinion makers in the village, form a good step that needs to be continued.

Oxfam has coordinated with the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) and facilitated visits to the project areas. But the Ministry lacks both, budgetary provisions and a representation at the District level.

#### **4.1.6 Local governance structures strengthened**

Women and men shuras are the community institutions promoted by the project. The rationale was to create strong institutions that could help in consultative planning and implementation of the programme. Linking the shuras with the district level government was also seen as a strategy to reduce the pressure on NGOs. They were viewed as local community structures, which would make the

traditional power holders weaker and would continue even in the event of deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan.

Currently, the main role the shuras play is with respect to managing the delivery of the Oxfam Programme. Men shuras have started approaching the district government officials with the problems they are facing like safe drinking water, pest control, and school and road construction. Women shuras create awareness about safe delivery, resolving fights between women and stopping child marriage. The concept of shuras as representative and accountable community institutions remains to be actualised. At present, there is no criterion to ensure the representation of different vulnerable groups in the shuras. Therefore, in some villages, farmers, arbabs and mullahs dominate the shuras whereas in again others landless labourers and sharecroppers are also members of this institution. In some villages re-election of shura members has taken place, whereas in others membership is seen as permanent and not contingent on performance.

District and provincial governments have been in office in Afghanistan for little over one year. Be it true that different departments have been constituted and that appointments are made, the provincial and district governments lack budgetary provisions to undertake development activities. The budget covers only the salary costs of the employees. Taxes are collected at the district level from flourmills, shops and diesel. Funds are also collected from the fines on people breaking the law. Half of the money collected is handed over to the provincial government. The remainder is in the order of magnitude of Afg. 100,000 per year (US\$ 2,000) per district. There are no taxes on people's income or land. Government officials mention that people are still recovering from a very long war and it is not fair to ask them to pay these taxes. With the exception of the education and health departments, government officials neither possess professional qualifications nor experience relevant to the positions, which they hold. Motivation levels of the district officials are weak as the salaries are low.

In this scenario Oxfam tends to replace the government in SIB and Yawan. The government, instead of taking over the role of service delivery, approaches Oxfam with a request for initiating and funding development activities. The dependence of the shuras continues to be on Oxfam and there are limited possibilities for the shuras to effectively demand the services from the government.

Coordination with the district officials appears to be good but at the provincial level Oxfam needs to engage more with the government. AKF, Concern, Afghan Aid and Oxfam GB have taken the initiative to establish the Badakhshan Development Forum. The main aim of this forum is to provide a platform for NGOs to share their experiences, to lobby and network with government officials and to build the capacity of government officials. This initiative needs to be carefully nurtured and strengthened.

## **4.2 Programme evaluation**

### **4.2.1 Relevance**

#### ***Institutional policies***

SDC's support to the Badakhshan Community Based Rural Livelihoods Programme, relates to its Medium Term Strategy for Afghanistan, which stipulates, among others, its strategic focus on livelihood and community development. In this respect, SDC aims to strengthening government structures, in particular at local level, as well as community shuras for an effective decentralised,

transparent and accountable exercise of power. The partnership with Oxfam addresses both, emergency relief and long-term development of marginal communities, through strengthening government bodies, including traditional decision-making and conflict resolution structures.<sup>3</sup>

Oxfam aims to gradually move away from emergency/relief/rehabilitation and service delivery to a more facilitating role. However, Oxfam recognises that despite new opportunities for linkages between local communities and local government structures, “current needs and capacities require that the programme continues to directly deliver services to communities over the course of the three-year programme”<sup>4</sup>. Though it is true that improved governance is expressively addressed in the programme document, this domain has been largely neglected during implementation. The funds allocated for strengthening of local governance are modest (only 1% of the programme budget). Instead of strengthening community based institutions and local government and creating links between them, the programme has rather been run in a manner parallel to government. Although not foreseen in the programme document, complementarities and synergy with ongoing decentralisation and planning efforts have not been availed.

**Research and analysis:** Especially during programme preparation, research and analysis of prevailing livelihood systems and opportunities have remained underexposed. This has influenced the relevance of the activities, undertaken by the field projects. Generally speaking, members of male and female shuras (established by the project to broaden the narrow power traditionally constituted by arbabs, religious leaders and military commanders) have been involved in the needs assessments but genuine participatory livelihoods methods have not been used, nor have any data been collected on differences in access to, and control over resources, according to social group and gender. It is therefore nearly impossible to assess power differentials with regards to the distribution of assets and their inherent implication on outcomes in terms of equitable development.

**Project cycle management:** Be it true that the shuras have been consulted, programme development has not been done in a genuinely participatory manner. The programme preparation fits well into the prevalent lobbying culture, as observed during field visits, in which delegations of villagers make their wishes known to the project management. Needs assessment is hardly ever the result of a commonly undertaken analysis, in which subjective needs and objective opportunities are matched and in which the expected effect on gender and socio-economic categories is assessed.

After initial programme development by both project teams and coordination by the provincial programme management team the Oxfam programme development team has had the task to streamline the activities and to bring them in line with the so-called logical framework. Whereas the objectively verifiable indicators have been defined they are not SMART and initial benchmarks are missing by which it is difficult to measure progress in relative terms. For example, no resource maps have been drawn up which could serve this particular purpose. If the indicator is that school attendance has increased but no benchmark figure is available, the project but also the evaluators, entirely depend on qualitative information from the community members in order to measure progress made. This was the case for the measurement of progress in almost all activities.

**Relevance of project objectives:** The project purpose is relevant in terms of addressing food and income security, as well as for the resulting increased access to health and education services of the

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<sup>3</sup> SDC's Medium Term Strategy for Afghanistan 2004-2007, Bern, 2004.

<sup>4</sup> Programme Document Badakhshan Programme, 2003.

population, with emphasis on a gender-balanced development. In this perspective, the indicators mentioned in the logical framework are self-explanatory.

**Concluding remark:** In view of the specific site conditions, vulnerabilities and shocks as analysed for the project area, the objectives and objectively verifiable indicators are all highly relevant. The assets of landless, marginal farmers and women effectively need to be strengthened, which is expected to positively influence this particular group's access to basic service provision. Unfortunately accompanying measures are lacking to specifically reach out to, and measure the impact on vulnerable groups. It goes without saying that improved linkages between community institutions and local government structures ought to be emphasized in order to develop institutionally and financially sustainable solutions, independent from Oxfam.

#### 4.2.2 Effectiveness

**Effectiveness of the programme interventions:** The six specific objectives are highly relevant for improving the livelihoods of the population, no accompanying measures have been developed to specifically target landless and marginal farmers and, only to a very limited extent, women. Approximately a quarter of the households are landowners and/or owning at least an ox, a third is landless and the remainder (approximately 40%) are sharecroppers. In line with Islamic heritage law women can own land but in practice very few do so. Apart from livestock intervention which is directly targeted at the poor its not clear how the rest will lead to food and income security increase. The efforts to improve the income from livestock are appreciable, but needs to be carefully thought through. The ability of cross bred cows to fulfil the needs of the population for milk, meat, dung and animal traction appears to be doubtful.

Substantial progress made in addressing gender inequities. Demand has been generated for literacy classes, men are allowed to teach girls in some of the villages, women have been trained as Basic Veterinary Workers, Women's Day has been celebrated. Initial steps towards participation of women in decision making in private and public sphere is visible. A big challenge faced is the restrictions placed on mobility and interactions with men outside the family. Efforts to work with mullahs, who are the opinion makers in the village, form a good step that needs to be continued. Lot of ground needs to be covered to address gender inequities in this conservative society with deeply rooted inequalities

With regards to the introduction of safe public and environmental health practices, provision of drinking water has greatly reduced the time spent on water collection. Communities have also started making the link between health and hygiene and report a decline in sickness. Lack of baseline data makes it nearly impossible to assess the impact of health education, as well as the reduction in maternal and infant mortality rate.

**Institutional development and institutional strengthening:** Neither the new male and female shuras, nor the district government have been organisationally strengthened. Although short-term training has been provided in conflict resolution, apparent needs in management training, the development of transparent accountability mechanisms, democratic decision making, and financial and administrative management have not been addressed. The funds available to address the governance issues have been very modest (only 1% of the programme budget).

The programme has not played a role of significance in linking in an institutionalised manner community based organisations with provincial and district government departments and specialised non-governmental agencies. Through lobbying with authorities of several departments, e.g. Education and Agriculture, Oxfam itself has taken the initiative to facilitate training in education, health, agriculture and livestock skills by provincial departmental staff.

**Capacity building and training:** With the support of provincial departments, Oxfam has concentrated on building individual skills in various domains, like demonstration plots (weeding, ploughing, grafting, use of improved seeds), seed bank management, kitchen gardening, live stock vaccination, health and environmental hygiene, women literacy and teacher training. Community-based institutions were formed such as PTCs and health committees, which equally received training. Members of shuras and district government were trained in peace building and conflict resolution. Community members also received on the spot training on civil engineering of drinking water supply schemes and canal and dam construction. Although most of this training was provided to individuals, these events were highly appreciated by the associated villagers. The results would even have been more effective if not all the training would have been given to individuals but also would have addressed local community groups and government institutions and if instead of a top-down approach, participatory methods of research, extension and learning (e.g. farmer field school approach or participatory technology development) would have been applied.

**Programme staffing:** Both district-based project teams appear to be understaffed. Apart from support staff, the senior staffs in both teams include a district team leader, an agronomist, a veterinarian, and a public health engineer (all male), as well as two community organizers and four health promoters (male and female). This means that in every district the only female staff-members consist of one community organizer and two health promoters. Given the specific cultural conditions, they are the only ones who have access to the female part of the population. In the case of e.g. female basic veterinary workers, they are being supervised by the female health coordinators and all activities in kitchen gardening are supervised by one single female community organizer. Male and female community organizers and health promoters are married couples so that at least the female staff member is accompanied while in the field. This small core team of field staff has to service many remote villages and often has to travel during five to eight hours by horse and therefore frequently has to spend the nights outside of its duty station. As compared to the magnitude of activities, and taking into account the remoteness, the appalling road conditions and the heavy work charge, the number of field staff is too limited. This is even more the case as the male technicians (agronomist, veterinarian, civil engineer) are not in a position to supervise the female population, and therefore the female community organizers and health promoters have a particular difficult task as a relay in the dissemination of technical messages and trainings.

In terms of effectiveness, number and/or technical skills of staff do not always appear to be commensurate the complexity in livelihood opportunities, in livestock, agriculture, horticulture and income generating activities. At the same time, partnerships with specialised agencies, actively involved in livelihoods improvement in the region do hardly go beyond an exchange of experiences and are not institutionalised.

**Concluding remark:** Although the six specific objectives are highly relevant for improving the livelihoods of the population, no accompanying measures have been developed to specifically target landless and marginal farmers and, only to a very limited extent, women. In the first place, no initial bench marking has been done, good quality data base are lacking on the distribution of household

assets, as well as on prevailing livelihood systems and coping mechanisms per social or gender category and, last but not least, no governance institutions have been developed guaranteeing an equitable distribution of results. This has resulted in a situation in which it is nearly impossible to assess progress because of lacking initial benchmarks.

### **4.2.3 Efficiency**

***Programme expansion:*** The geographical expansion to Yawan district is justified by the fact that it is known to be one of the poorest district in the province and that it is adjacent to Shahr-I-Buzurg district, be it across a high mountain range. However, presently the road connecting the two districts is not practicable by cars and therefore the connection goes via Faizabad, a difficult backbreaking car trip of 9-10 hours. Therefore, from the point of view of pursuing efficiency and synergy between the two programme components, the recent expansion to Yawan district does not appear to be fully justified. However, now that in Yawan the programme is well on its way, positive expectations have been raised and consequently it is logic to pursue Oxfam's programme in Yawan during a next phase. Given the remoteness of the area and the relatively limited available programme means (in terms of budget and qualified personnel), the focus on a reduced number of villages in Shahr-I-Buzurg makes a lot of sense, in order to avoid spreading resources thin. The remaining 25 villages form a geographical cluster of grouped villages. The same goes for the 15 villages in Yawan district.

#### ***Time efficiency***

As experienced during the field visits to both districts, in spite of the clustered location of villages in which the programme intervenes, lacking time efficiency in activity implementation is a major bottleneck. This is in the first place due to the remoteness of the area, its mountainous terrain, the deep snow isolating many villages during winter time, (up to six months), the appalling condition of the road infrastructure, lacking security conditions at night time and certain cultural factors, like gender segregation and lengthy prayer-cum-lunch breaks. At least half of the villages can only be reached on horseback. Whereas field staff, such as social organizers and health promoters, all married couples, regularly spend the night in remote villages, the lodging facilities are not sufficiently convenient to expect a more prolonged stay.

***Programme coordination:*** The internal programme coordination is well organised between the programme manager in Kabul, the provincial programme co-ordinator in Faizabad and the two district team leaders. This management team works in a mutually supportive way, to the entire satisfaction of all interviewed senior and support staff. Some support staff members have, however, expressed their reservations on what they call the Pakhtoon dominance in provincial and district management, in a mainly Tajiki and Uzbeki setting. This appears to be rather a matter of principle, since not one single act of discriminatory attitude or behaviour has been brought to our notice. It needs to be mentioned that Oxfam has a very good system in place to ensure security of staff and visitors.

As far as the external coordination with provincial and district government and with other development actors is concerned, which are active in the area, a limited exchange of experiences takes place, e.g. through the so-called Badakhshan Development Forum, consisting of Afghan aid, AKF, CONCERN and Oxfam. BDF is presently headed by the AKF. During interviews with managers of the above organisations, the evaluators got the impression that Oxfam appears to operate in isolation, especially with regards to the provincial development plan. Organisations like Afghan Aid and AKF seem to be more involved in facilitating hardware development as prioritised during the provincial

planning process, which provides them with sufficient credibility to equally pursue their own prioritised activities. The director of the Provincial Development Programme criticised Oxfam for its apparent lack of collaboration towards the preparation and implementation of the provincial plan.

The playing field is well demarcated between international NGOs operating in the same districts. In Yawan, CONCERN has a programme, which is very similar to Oxfams. Both organisations have decided to avoid overlap in area coverage and regularly meet to exchange experiences.

**Networking and linkages:** Oxfam provincial team successfully lobbies with government departments (e.g. agriculture, health and education) and international NGOs to train project staff, community committees and individuals in various technical disciplines. Linkages with the above organisations are generally perceived as being beneficial to Oxfams programme.

It has been observed that Oxfam staff is not really up to the state of the art in various technical disciplines, which it is covering (a very positive exception is the construction of drinking water schemes and irrigation canals and gender equity in which Oxfam has an apparent edge over the other implementing agencies). Many innovative livelihood opportunities are being tried out by organisations like AKF and Afghan Aid who create more space for participatory experimentation, and thereby failure and success, learning, and exposure to relevant experiences elsewhere in the mountainous area of Pakistan, Tajikistan and India. Oxfam is not sufficiently engaging with these processes.

**Financial efficiency:** In general the total phase budget of US\$ 1,778,366 is modest as compared to the magnitude of needs in the programme area. However, as compared to implementation capacity (management, knowledge and number wise) it seems to be in line with what could, reasonably speaking, be expected.

A budget-expenditure comparison per 1 April 2006 shows that, with a quarter of the programme running time still remaining, 29% of SDC funds and 18% of other funds had not yet been used. In particular expenses on soil and water conservation, tree saplings, nursery management, livestock, education, governance and M&E (SDC contribution) still showed a considerable balance.

**Concluding remark:** Oxfams comparative advantage seems to be in the field of water and sanitation and promoting changes in gender relations, in strengthening livelihood assets the organisation seems to be somewhat disconnected from today's state of the art in participatory agricultural research and extension methodologies, as well as in strengthening of governance structures. This goes at the expense of efficiency in obtaining the expected outputs. In the future field staff might need a more specialised technical profile and there is an obvious opportunity to subcontract state of the art technical interventions to specialised agencies (e.g. AKF and UNICEF). Oxfam should recognize its strengths and weaknesses and rather move to facilitation and networking than to implementation in isolation.

#### **4.2.4 Sustainability**

**Institutional learning and knowledge management:** An institutional learning culture is not yet visible. The feedback of quantified indicators needs to be set into a meaningful framework of analysis in which the impact of project interventions ought to be assessed in terms of strengthened assets and reduced vulnerabilities at a household level. As already indicated here above, focussed case studies could contribute to this.

***Institutional and financial sustainability:*** Oxfam shows a tendency to manage the entire programme in isolation from ongoing national decentralisation efforts and provincial planning initiatives, which are of a more recent date than the start of the present phase. The programme provides heavily subsidised services to the communities and individual beneficiaries, instead of strengthening local management, revenue and saving-cum-credit systems. It goes without saying that this has created a dependency, which goes against principles of institutional and financial sustainability. Although the use of subsidies might to a certain extent be justified in an emergency situation, from the outset of programme intervention it needs a clear strategy as how to gradually phase out from subsidies and resemble normal market conditions. AKF uses a system of micro-finance (saving and credit schemes for self-help groups), which is fully accessible to marginal farmers, landless and women. Learning from AKF might provide lessons in reducing dependency on outside support.

Even at present community is willing to pay for some services like those of basic veterinary workers. While interviewing staff on the future of the Yawan nursery it was taken for granted that it will be handed over to district government. As could be observed from the success of the small hydro-electrical power plants, which sprout up everywhere, handing over to private sector provides a promising alternative.

#### **4.3 Agreement to disagree**

- The evaluators would like to put the following statement on file: Both evaluators highly appreciate the hard work being done by both field teams in a very remote area, characterised by difficult working conditions. Both projects have successfully established themselves and are well perceived by the local population. Particularly with regards to changes in attitudes and behaviour the project has been successful.
- There is, however, an apparent difference in appreciation of programme results between the two evaluators.
- On the hand, a number of observations are made in order to explain a number of opportunities which have remained under-exposed: (1) Afghanistan recently came out of war, (2) Badakhshan in among the poorest and most traditional areas, (3) Security conditions are tenuous, (4) District and Provincial governments are of recent origin and funds allocated for local governance strengthening are modest (3,000 GBP) (4) Comparison to agencies like AKF is not fair as they do not target the most remote areas and have huge funds and human resources at their disposal. There is also some difference in thinking on the level of subsidies that are justified in Afghanistan at present. One view is that subsidies will be required for some time in Afghanistan. Investments will have to be made by donors and the government to strengthen livelihoods of the poor people. Communities can make contribution to the development work in the village through voluntary labour and also play a greater role in management of assets but funds for creation of assets will have to be provided from outside.
- On the other hand it is has been observed that: (1) Other agencies succeed to work in a participatory manner in comparable and even more traditional areas, (2) Badakhshan does not appear to be poorer and more traditional than many other areas in the region in which livelihoods programmes are successfully run, and the security conditions are by no means comparable to several other parts of the country, (3) Linkage to national and provincial decentralisation and planning efforts would have placed the programme in the mainstream of development and avoided parallel approaches. Once these programmes designed, the donors could have been invited to make additional funds available for local government strengthening, (4) May it be true that

agencies like AKF are funded more generously, participatory approaches have proved to be more cost-effective than top-down delivery. This agency works in even more remote areas than in SIB and Yawan (e.g. in Wakhan), (5) Although in an emergency situation the use of subsidies may be justified, the fact that Oxfam is either fully or partially subsidising the entire package of activities appears to be counterproductive, if sustainable financial and institutional solutions are to be developed anchored in private sector development (e.g. AKF has a no-subsidy policy but strengthens, instead, access to micro-credit and saving/credit schemes accessible to vulnerable people).

The findings of the present evaluation have to be seen against the backdrop of the above statement.

#### **4.4 Summary of findings**

- The programme has succeeded to establish itself in a remote area and has created substantial goodwill by initially responding to emergency needs after the 1998 earthquake and presently by compensating for government weakness in delivering basic services.
- The programme has succeeded to positively influence attitudes and behaviour to girl's education, and public health practices. It has put the role of women in reproductive and productive tasks in the forefront and it has succeeded in creating some basic understanding on the opportunities for increased women's participation in public affairs. However, other efforts needed to ensure the education of children like the construction of schools and the recruitment of female teachers for girl children have not been very successful. Quality of education being provided to children also needs to be addressed.
- In line with available financial means and technical skills, the programme has modestly contributed to the strengthening of livelihood options in livestock, horticulture and agriculture.
- Training and other support in health, education and livelihood improvements was provided by technical government departments. It remains, however, unclear, to what extent the vulnerable groups have really benefited.
- Oxfam managed service delivery has prevailed over strengthening local institutions in management and funding capacities. Be it true that from the outset of the programme it was not foreseen to link up to the national decentralisation effort and to the provincial planning process, such a linkage could have contributed to mainstreaming in terms of national policies.
- Due to the remoteness of the area, appalling road conditions and lack of suitable accommodation, time efficiency is low.
- In terms of effectiveness, number and/or technical skills of field staff do not always appear commensurate with the complexity in livelihood opportunities.
- During programme preparation, research and analysis of prevailing livelihood systems have remained underexposed. Neither have genuine participatory livelihoods assessment methods been used, nor have any data been made available on differences in access to, and control over resources, according to social group and gender.
- The programme has emphasized training by outside institutions. Individuals trained in improved livelihood technologies provide feedback to community shuras. Instead of using a top-down approach in training, participatory methods of research, extension and learning could have been availed.
- The departure point for project cycle management was a needs assessment through shuras. Whereas objectively verifiable indicators have been laid down in a logical framework, their

measurement, especially in terms of impact on different socio-economic categories is nearly impossible because of lacking household livelihood data and benchmarks.

- The programme appears to be understaffed with regards to technical staff. The workload on women staff is high who apart from addressing issues related to health, education, and women's rights also have to provide technical information/training for women. Cultural restrictions have prevented Oxfam male technicians from interacting with women in the villages.
- It has been observed that Oxfam is not always up to the state of the art in various technical disciplines, which it is covering. The efficiency in terms of achieving expected outputs shows a clear potential for improvement by relying more on outside specialised agencies (e.g. through formalised partnerships), be it true that this was not foreseen in the programme document.
- The internal programme coordination is well organised. The external coordination with provincial and district government and with other development actors is limited to an exchange of experiences. Oxfam is seen as not sufficiently supporting provincial planning and learning from experiences of other development actors, operating in the field of livelihoods improvement. Since the decentralised planning process is equally of a more recent date, it goes without saying that this was not reflected in the programme document either.
- An institutional learning culture is not yet visible. The feedback of quantified indicators needs to be set into a meaningful framework of analysis in which the impact of project interventions ought to be assessed in terms of strengthened assets and reduced vulnerabilities at a household level.
- In view of the specific site conditions, vulnerabilities and shocks, as analysed for the project area, objectives and activities are all highly relevant.
- In spite of a high relevance, no accompanying measures have been developed to specifically target landless and marginal farmers and women.
- On an average, programme expenses are on schedule and in line with the implementation capacity. Time efficiency is low and deserves attention.
- The institutional and financial sustainability of project activities shows a clear potential for improvement. Be it true that district government capacities and funds are nearly non-existent this should not lead to an autarkical attitude. A large majority of project interventions are fully or largely subsidised. Now that the programme is evolving from relief/rehabilitation towards long-term development, a strategy needs to be developed to phase out from subsidies. Self-help groups, active in saving-credit schemes could provide a viable alternative. The opportunity of privatisation should be explored systematically.

## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given the extreme vulnerabilities in the remote mountain area of Badakhshan it is fully justified to extend the project by another two phases of three years each.
- The present area coverage should be maintained in order to add more quality in an area where the population is receptive for innovations, instead of spreading relatively modest resources too thin.
- A next phase should emphasize capacity building in institutional development and organisational strengthening of community-based institutions and district government.
- Programmatically the focus areas should be livelihoods, water and sanitation, governance with gender as a cross cutting issue. Oxfam should play the role of gap filling in addressing education and maternal and child health.
- Active efforts should be made to lobby development agencies having expertise in these sectors to come to the programme areas. Until this is possible, Oxfam should continue to address education and maternal and infant mortality.
- The focus on women's empowerment should now shift to helping women own assets and having control over income. This can be done through planning and implementing a livelihood intervention with women's group, e.g. in livestock development. Working simultaneously with men shuras and mullahs, on allowing women greater mobility and freedom, should continue.
- The technical profile of field staff needs to be stepped up and their number increased. This is particularly relevant for female staff.
- Technical support to livelihood options, in particular in livestock, horticulture and agriculture, should be sub-contracted to specialized agencies through institutionalised and strategic partnerships or appropriately qualified technical people should be placed in the field teams.
- Financial sustainability will be pursued through gradually phasing out from subsidies. At the same time self-help groups can be established geared towards community-based saving/credit schemes modestly financed with rotating funds. Moreover, private sector options need to be systematically explored.
- Oxfam should learn from experiences within Afghanistan and other countries with fledgling democracies on strategies adopted to reduce dependency of the communities and ensure sustainability. The role Government, NGOs, Community and Private Sector in this scenario should be analysed and feed into the development of next phase of the programme.
- The order of magnitude of funding could be somewhat increased to approximately US\$ 2 million for a future three-years phase, in order to enable subcontracting arrangements, the reinforcement of technical field staff and the establishment of a rotating fund for saving-credit purposes (replacing subsidies).
- It is recommended that SDC and Oxfam will lobby with major players in the health and education sectors to step up their investments in the area.
- Lobbying is also needed with regards to the improvement of the main roads connecting the district headquarters with the interprovincial road. In the ideal case, the WFP (and supporting donors) should be motivated to use labour-intensive public work (LIPW) programmes to improve the rural feeder roads. Given the present drought and resulting food scarcity in the area, such an approach is fully justified. In view of the difficult terrain, LIPW programmes need to be supported by outsourced heavy equipment.
- There is an opportunity to more actively link up with the national decentralization effort and the provincial planning process in order to obtain the goodwill to pursue the own programme and to successfully lobby with donors to invest in the infrastructure development of the programme area..

- A clear vision of developing shuras as strong community institution needs to be developed. The shuras should have representation of vulnerable groups and be accountable to the village community. Alternatively, CDCs can be established, in line with the national decentralisation plan. Transferring funds for village development to shuras and/or CDCs and supporting them in planning and implementing the programme can make a major contribution to institutional development. Staff capacity to facilitate the shuras as democratic peoples institutions will have to be built.
- Instead of using top-down training approaches, directed to individuals, it is suggested to introduce participatory methods of research, extension and learning (e.g. farmer field schools and participatory technology development, as already practised by AKF).
- During programme preparation, participatory livelihood assessment methods need to be used in order to establish a database and benchmarks serving the purpose of impact measurement.
- The programme design should be based on a detailed analysis of livelihood strategies, assets, threats and vulnerabilities for different socio economic and vulnerable groups. Consultations with both men and women should be ensured. The livestock sector has an important potential to strengthen income and food security of the poor. Information on breed management, husbandry practices, forest and pasture management systems, and engagement with markets should be collected.
- It is recommended that a historical analysis of livelihoods in Badakshan should be carried out to understand the type of livelihoods that can be promoted in this food deficit region characterised by hostile terrain, harsh winters, poor water availability and soil conditions.
- It is recommended that with support of SDC and AKF, Oxfam will orient itself towards livelihood options as successfully developed in comparable agro-ecological zones in Afghanistan and in the region.
- The programme needs to systematically monitor, validate and disseminate its impacts on asset strengthening and the reduction of vulnerabilities of its beneficiaries, broken down according to gender criteria and socio-economic stratification. Short case studies of impact on the daily life of households should complete quantitative monitoring.
- Progress monitoring based on quantified indicators need to be complemented with selecting a few households and tracking their condition over the programme period. This could help in identifying positive as well as negative factors impacting on the programme performance which may not have been thought of at the time of developing of the monitoring and evaluation system.
- It is recommended that in a future phase, the programme will emphasize its facilitating, linking and capacity building role.

## **ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Terms of Reference for the External Review of Oxfam Community-Based Rural Livelihoods Programme in Badakhshan, Afghanistan 7<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> August, 2006**

These TORs are for a team of two consultants, a man and a woman.

#### **1 Programme background**

The Programme, entitled *Community-Based Rural Livelihoods*, started on October 2003 and seeks to achieve the following objectives within three years. As the ways to achieve the set objectives, the Programme mainly focuses on livelihoods promotion, preventive primary health and hygiene education, provision of safe drinking water, school buildings construction and teacher training, gender awareness, and strengthening the local governance structures.

The Programme covers 40 communities in two districts of Badakhshan (25 in Shahr-I-Buzurg, 15 in Yawan) directly addressing the needs of 10,000 individuals in the target districts. These beneficiaries include vulnerable groups such as small and marginal farmers, landless households with no or little income earning ability, women, widows, children and physically and mentally challenged people. The programme, financed by Oxfam GB, Oxfam America, Oxfam Australia (Community Aid Abroad) and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), is planned to end in November 2006.

#### **2 Programme's goal and objectives**

The programme is run under six key objectives contributing to the overall goal of the programme that is "*Reduction in vulnerability amongst the poorest people in Shahr-I-Buzurg and Yawan Districts of Badakhshan Province*". The objectives are:

1. The landless and marginal farmers will expand their asset base and alternative livelihoods for increased household level food and income security
2. Increased access for boys and girls to improved education
3. Men, women and children adopt safe public and environmental health practices and have access to improved health services
4. Reduction in maternal and infant mortality rates
5. Gender equality is promoted by challenging ideas, beliefs and attitudes that perpetuate women's subordination and by encouraging their participation in social, political and economic decision making processes
6. Local governance structures strengthened and capacity built to make them more accountable and effective

#### **3 Purpose and objectives of the external review**

The purpose of the external review is to assess the impact of the programme over the past three years, and provide information to help shape the development of Oxfam's future interventions in the target areas in line with Oxfam's recently developed five-year provincial strategic plan. Specific objectives of the external review are:

- To evaluate the extent to which the aim and objectives of the programme have been met since October 2003 with reference to the impact indicators detailed in the programme log-frame.
- To evaluate the relevance of programme interventions with the priority needs of the target beneficiaries.
- To analyse the current and potential sustainability of each programme intervention towards sustainable livelihoods of the target people.

- To assess the extent and usefulness of Oxfam's cooperation with authorities at district and provincial level.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the project's efforts regarding capacity building of local governance structures.
- To provide constructive feedback and recommendations, particularly in terms of lessons learned and any examples of best practice.
- To provide explained recommendations to Oxfam for the future of the project (closure, winding up phase, extension).

**Outcomes:**

- A greater understanding of the Programme's impacts and relevance.
- The identification of which interventions can contribute further in achieving the programme's overall goal in the long term.
- Lessons learned in development practice, programme management and M&E at field and country programme levels.

**4. Methodology**

- Review key programme documents, such as the proposal, log frame, M&E reports and donor reports.
- Develop an evaluation methodology and timetable for the mission.
- Conduct interviews with Oxfam team members.
- Conduct interviews with beneficiary communities, including village consuls/shuras (men and women).
- Conduct interviews with the local authorities and some of other NGOs working in the same target areas.
- Visit projects or programme activities and sites.

**5. Outputs of the mission (Reporting)**

- Based on a short Aide memoir, verbally present key findings of the mission to key Oxfam and SDC staff before leaving the country.
- Submit a joint report to Oxfam and SDC within 2 weeks of departure from the country. Allow 1 week for review and comments by both SDC and Oxfam, and submit final report within 1 week of receiving those.

**6. Audience**

- Oxfam GB in Afghanistan and Oxfam Regional Management Centre in Delhi, SDC in Afghanistan and HQ in Switzerland
- Donors listed in *Background*, and other relevant donors.

The team will comprise two consultants, if possible with ;

- rural livelihoods background
- gender and community mobilisation background

**7. Itinerary and number of days**

The following itinerary might be reviewed for flights availability and security constraints.

**Monday 7<sup>th</sup> August :** arrival in Kabul – security briefing – logistics (phones, accommodation)

**Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> August :** briefing with SDC (expectations). Programme briefing (Oxfam and SDC). Review of documentation.

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> August :** travel to Faizabad by UNHAS flight. Travel from Faizabad to Shar I Buzurg by Oxfam car.

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> August – Friday 11<sup>th</sup>** : field visits in Shar I Buzurg  
**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> August** : travel from Shar I Buzurg to Faizabad by Oxfam car.  
**Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> August** : travel from Faizabad to Yawan by Oxfam car.  
**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> August** : field visits in Yawan.  
**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> August** : field visits in Yawan.  
**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> August** : travel back to Faizabad by Oxfam car.  
**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> August** : travel from Faizabad to Kabul by UNHAS or PACTEC plane  
**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August** : off  
**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> August – Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August** : aide memoir writing and debriefing to Oxfam and SDC in Kabul.  
**Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August** : travel back to home.

**Number of days:**

|                      |    |                |
|----------------------|----|----------------|
| International travel | 4  |                |
| Preparation          | 1  |                |
| Work in Afghanistan  | 12 |                |
| Report writing       | 4  |                |
| Debriefing in Bern   | 1  |                |
| <b>TOTAL:</b>        |    | <b>22 days</b> |

**8. Logistics support**

- Flights from home to Kabul to be booked by consultant and SDC.
- Internal flights and cars to be booked by Oxfam;
- Security briefing and security clearance for movements by Oxfam CPR or security officer;
- SDC to provide 1 Thuraya phone and Oxfam to provide 1 Thuraya phone
- Accommodation in the field to be provided by Oxfam;
- SDC to take care of accommodation and transport in Kabul for Swiss consultant;
- Oxfam to take care of accommodation and transport in Kabul for its consultant.

**9. Documents**

Credit proposal  
 Oxfam's report  
 SDC's MTSA  
 I-ANDS & Compact

\* \* \*

## ANNEX 2: MISSION SCHEDULE

| Date     | Itinerary   |
|----------|---|
| 05.08.06 | KG: DEL-KBL<br>KG: security briefing Oxfam<br>JK: GVA-ZRH-DXB   |
| 06.08.06 | JK: DXB-KBL<br>JK: Security briefing Oxfam  |
| 07.08.06 | General briefing: Oxfam<br>Briefing: SDC<br>Meeting with Gender advisor Oxfam   |
| 08.08.06 | Flight: PACTEC: Kabul – Yawan<br>Briefing Oxfam Yawan staff<br>Field visit: Sar-I-Pool village  |
| 09.08.06 | Field visit Dasht-e-Sulaiman village<br>Visit District Government Yawan District<br>Visit Field Office CONCERN  |
| 10.08.06 | Field visit Anj village   |
| 11.08.06 | Travel by road from Yawan via Faizabad to Shar-I-Buzurg District  |
| 12.08.06 | Briefing SIB Office<br>Field visit to Petaw village   |
| 13.08.06 | Field visit to Katak village<br>Field visit to Razak village<br>Field visit to Shadast village  |
| 14.08.06 | Visit District Government Shar-I-Buzurgh District<br>Field visit to Dasht-e-Fering village<br>Travel by road to Faizabad  |
| 15.08.06 | Visit to Provincial Department of Women’s Affairs<br>Visit to Director of Provincial Development Plan (PDP)<br>Visit to Afghan Aid Provincial Office<br>Visit to Aga Khan Foundation Provincial Office<br>Visit to Badakhshan Development Forum |
| 16.08.07 | Travel by road to Kunduz  |
| 17.08.06 | (Delayed) Flight PACTEC from Kunduz to Kabul<br>Meetings at Oxfam Office<br>Preparation of outline debriefing meeting   |
| 18.08.06 | Preparation of debriefing meeting   |
| 19.08.06 | Debriefing meeting with Oxfam and SDC at SDC Office, Kabul<br>Informal meeting with National Direction AKF (JK)   |
| 20.08.06 | Flight KBL-DXB (JK)   |
| 21.08.06 | Flight KBL-DEL (KG)<br>Flight DXB-ZRH-GVA (JK)  |

### ANNEX 3: DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

| #  | Author   | Year | Title   |
|----|----------|------|---|
|    | AREU/WB  | 2004 | A Guide to Government in Afghanistan, Case Study: Badakhshan Province                                     |
| 1  | BDF      | --   | Overall Objectives (Handout)  |
| 2  | DFID     | --   | Sustainable Livelihoods Guidance Sheets   |
| 3  | IC       | 1993 | Soil and water conservation   |
| 4  | Oxfam    | 2004 | “What we do”: ( <a href="http://www.oxfam.cl">www.oxfam.cl</a> )  |
| 5  | Oxfam-GB | 2001 | International Briefing Paper: “Food has now run out for many Afghan people”                               |
| 6  | Oxfam-GB | 2003 | Programme Document Badakhshan Programme   |
| 7  | Oxfam-GB | 2004 | Interim Report 1 for SDC  |
| 8  | Oxfam-GB | 2005 | BDK Activity Plan for 2006  |
| 9  | Oxfam-GB | 2005 | Interim Report 2 for SDC  |
| 10 | Oxfam-GB | 2006 | Activity Plan of Oxfam Yawan Field Office   |
| 11 | Oxfam-GB | 2006 | Activity Plan of Oxfam SIB Field Office   |
| 12 | Oxfam-GB | 2006 | Interim Financial Report: Overview Expenses against Budget  |
| 13 | Oxfam-GB | 2006 | Detailed Work Plan April – September 2006 BCBRLP  |
| 14 | Oxfam-GB | 2006 | Badakhshan 5 Year Strategy Plan   |
| 15 | Oxfam-GB | 2006 | Security Guidelines   |
| 16 | Oxfam-GB | 2006 | Sector-wise Monitoring Sheets   |
| 17 | Oxfam-GB | 2006 | Monitoring & Evaluation Monthly Data for SIB and Yawan Districts  |
| 18 | Oxfam-GB | 2006 | M&E Inputs for Five Year Programme  |
| 19 | Oxfam-GB | 2006 | Badakhshan Community Based Rural Livelihood Programme; BDK Monitoring Report                              |
| 20 | Oxfam-US | 2001 | “Oxfam”s Emergency Aid in Badakhshan”: ( <a href="http://www.oxfamamerica.org">www.oxfamamerica.org</a> ) |
| 21 | Oxfam-US | 2003 | The Revival of Shahr-I-Buzurg ( <a href="http://www.oxfamamerica.org">www.oxfamamerica.org</a> )          |
| 22 | PDP      | 2006 | Summary of Provincial Development Plan Badakhshan   |
| 23 | SDC      | 2003 | SDC’s Medium Term Strategy for Afghanistan 2004-2007  |

**ANNEX 4: PERSONS AND INSTITUTIONS MET**

**[Annex Removed]**

**ANNEX 5: AREA MAP**

**[Annex Rmoved]**

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