

**Evaluation Report: Yemen Emergency Food Security Response 2012/13**

**Response to Evaluation Report**

The Department for International Development (DFID) provided £13.3 million in 2012/13 to support 64,168 food-insecure households in Yemen (approximately 439,000 people) through funding to Oxfam and Save the Children (SCI); £8.3m to Oxfam and £5m to Save the Children. This was a key part of the UK's response to the critical food security situation across Yemen following the political and economic turmoil in 2011.

The project sought to improve household food security of rural populations, including marginalised and non-marginalised communities, through the provision of staple food vouchers and unconditional cash transfers.

Oxfam implemented the programme in Al Hodeidah governorate and Save the Children International implemented it in Taiz, Lahj and Hajjah Governorates. Oxfam and Save both commissioned independent evaluations of their respective components, with support from DFID. These two evaluations have provided us with a rich set of lessons and DFID welcomes the findings.

Both evaluations concluded that improvements need to be made for both organisations in the project design and justification, targeting of beneficiaries, monitoring and evaluation framework, engagement with the Social Welfare Fund lists, and the integration of different activities. Attention was also focused on the need to move from emergency to early recovery interventions which increase sustainable livelihood provision.

A growing body of evidence, including the conclusions of these independent evaluations, suggests that longer term, predictable funding to address chronic humanitarian needs is more effective. This is why DFID Yemen's humanitarian funding has now shifted to at least 24 months rather than annual funding cycles in Yemen.

Both Oxfam and SCI have been successful in bidding for new multi-year humanitarian and resilience building interventions in Yemen. Both partners will be incorporating the lessons from these evaluations in their new programmes.

## Management Response & Recommendations Action Plan

### Evaluation Report: Yemen Emergency Food Security Response 2012/13

Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	If “Accepted”, Action plan for Implementation or if “Rejected”, Reason for Rejection
<b><i>OXFAM commissioned evaluation of DFID-funded Emergency Food Security Project in Al Hodeidah Governorate of Yemen, July 2013</i></b>		
1. Consider moving to alternative programmes to unconditional cash distribution in Al Hodeidah including targeted nutritional programs, associated limited cash distributions, cash for work and livelihoods activities. These should be informed by a theory of change based on strong situational analysis and evidence.	Accepted	<p>Stronger context analysis is planned in the new DFID programme in order to build a better evidence base of community needs. Detailed village profiling and Participatory Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis (PCVA) were conducted to feed into this. The PCVA investigates coping strategies utilised by communities to respond to stresses and shocks in order to design appropriate interventions.</p> <p>An Emergency Market Mapping Assessment (EMMA) was completed and fed into the programme design of the new DFID programme. The results recommended alternative interventions such as more livelihood based approaches and cash for work. In addition, Oxfam is starting a project to consolidate assessment findings and recommendations in order to make them more accessible and user friendly. Finally, a theory of change has been developed for use in Oxfam’s new resilience programme.</p> <p>In response to the recommendation to have stronger analysis and evidence for targeting, Oxfam has adapted its targeting strategy to be more tailored to the community by using community based targeting with participation on the Social Welfare Fund (SWF) list as a criteria. The advantage to this method is that the community can gain ownership and can determine who the most vulnerable are while still working with the verified SWF lists.</p>
2. More clearly articulate the key population groups of interest for Oxfam within the context of severe food insecurity and malnutrition. This should include not only the elderly, disabled and widows but also families with small children and pregnant or lactating women (PLW).	Accepted	Oxfam have improved their targeting approach. Unconditional cash transfers target food insecure households who are unable to provide for themselves or to take part in other more sustainable livelihoods activities. These categories include: the elderly, disabled, pregnant and lactating women, female headed households, and households with malnourished children less than 5 years of age.
3. Before using SWF or other external lists in the future, undertake a rapid assessment to check whether these cover all of Oxfam’s priority population groups.	Accepted	Village profiling has been conducted in the intervention area for the new DFID programme to give us a better understanding of the population. Participant selection will be finalised after a household verification process. This assists us to confirm the appropriateness of our target groups. Oxfam’s results of our verification show that over 90% of the SWF lists are valid in Al Hodeidah.
4. Undertake an analysis for SWF A and B lists to build knowledge about their utility for future food insecurity situations in Yemen, especially in terms of the extent to which they cover pregnant and lactating women (PLW) and small children.	Partially Accepted	The World Bank is currently looking into this type of analysis and is better placed to conduct it on a large scale. While Oxfam agrees that this recommendation would constitute an important work, we also recognise that we do not have the capacity at this time to conduct this type of analysis. Therefore we agree that it should be done but do not have plans in place to do it ourselves.

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<p>5. If such an assessment shows families with small children and PLWs are underrepresented in SWF A and B lists, consider alternatives to these two categories for future selection of beneficiaries. This could include a combination of SWF A and B lists, other SWF categories as well as client families of agencies undertaking formal nutritional work.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>PLW and households with malnourished children under 5 years of age are now part of our targeting criteria. Families with small children are too broad a category to include since we are looking to target those most in need. A vulnerability assessment was undertaken in Hajjah that provided socio-economic data. We also utilise secondary data from the Updated Food Security and Monitoring Survey (October 2013) and the Household Economic Assessment (December 2012).</p>
<p>6. Advocate for updating of SWF lists with greater community involvement so that they better reflect current vulnerabilities given the huge change in Yemen since lists were updated in 2008.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>There is a plan in place to update the SWF lists by the World Bank. This topic has been discussed with the SWF at the Cash and Voucher Technical Working Group (CVTWG) meeting and has been pushed by the Oxfam team at the field level in Al Hodeidah and Hajjah. In addition, Oxfam staff have worked with SWF staff to build capacity in household verification and to update lists at the field level.</p>
<p>7. Retain stronger documentary evidence for the selection of districts within Al Hodeidah.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Village profiling was used to target the districts and villages for the new DFID programme.</p>
<p>8. Undertake better analysis of the key vulnerability seasons for food insecure families and start the project to support families at the peak of the hunger season.</p>	<p>Partially accepted</p>	<p>Food insecure households in Yemen tend not to grow their own food due to lack of water. Rather, these households are dependent on buying their food. 90% of staple food items are imported, including 95% of wheat (UFSMS October 2013). The agricultural seasons appear to have little impact on market prices and are therefore not the main driver of when people are in most need of assistance to access food. While we agree that the cash transfers should coincide with when households are most in need, we also believe that all considerations including the hunger season should inform the timing of the disbursement.</p>
<p>9. Consider provision of unconditional cash assistance to labour deficient vulnerable households only, and cash for work and livelihoods work with other vulnerable families.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Oxfam has reviewed the earlier analysis of different cash alternatives and discussions on this topic have been ongoing at the Cash, Voucher, Transfer Working Group (CVTWG). Cash for work and livelihoods/income generating activities are now a part of our new programmes. Targeting strategy has been expanded as appropriate to target PLW and households with malnourished children less than 5 years of age.</p>
<p>10. Ensure that public health and nutritional information are included as explicit project focus. Poor utilization of food seems to be playing a key role in producing high malnutrition in Al Hodeidah.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Public health promotion, including training on nutrition, and public health engineering is integrated into Oxfam's new programme strategy in order to maximise our impact.</p>
<p>11. Wherever feasible, also undertake an analysis of the impact of lack of adequate WATSAN physical infrastructure on food insecurity and malnutrition, and target such gaps.</p>	<p>Partially Accepted</p>	<p>Oxfam will consider conducting this type of analysis in the future in the form of a needs assessment but currently we are relying on secondary data to provide this information, such as the UNICEF nutrition survey (January 2012) and the WASH Yemen Humanitarian Response plan 2013.</p>
<p>12. Identify more drought resilient food security and production options, for example ground water tapping, drip irrigation and rain water harvesting.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Oxfam will do research and design an integrated water resource management project in Hajjah and Al Hodeidah; this will include more efficient use of water for agriculture and drip irrigation, among other activities.</p>
<p>13. Undertake a formal capacity analysis of key local NGO partners such as Al-Mostaqbal and Yemeni</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>Initial partner assessments are conducted before Oxfam begins work with them. A large part of this assessment looks at capacity. Oxfam is finalising partnership</p>

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Women's Union (YWU) and develop a long-term capacity-building program for them which focus on both operational and strategic capacities.		contracts with three organisations: Yemeni Women's Union, Al Mustaqbal, and Abs Women Development Organisation. A separate capacity building analysis and long-term capacity building strategy is planned to identify gaps and opportunities.
14. Ensure senior management continuity in Sana'a to ensure project analysis and decisions are consistent.	Partially Accepted	During the duration of this programme, Oxfam had one staff member leave in Senior Management and this person was replaced without any gap, therefore do not see this as a challenge that has been have encountered yet. Oxfam recognises the importance of staff consistency and works towards this goal, however in a fragile context such as Yemen, it is difficult to attract and retain global senior staff. The recommendation may become a challenge to the mission in the future.
15. Develop clearer rationale why both an external mid-term and final evaluation are undertaken for such short duration projects and review the feasibility of doing a more comprehensive, representative and properly funded final evaluation only.	Accepted	Oxfam accepts that multiple assessments in such a short period of time may not have been necessary. Our aim was to ensure that our cash transfer programme was well documented for organisational learning and sharing. In the future we will match the number of assessments closer to what is more realistic with regard to the timeline.
16. Identify at the proposal stage the criteria that will be used to evaluate the project and develop a clearer Monitoring and Evaluation plan which spells out the role of various internal and external activities, how they complement each other in addressing the various criteria ensuring objectivity and methodological rigor.	Accepted	Oxfam has identified advisors to assist to create a clear Monitoring and Evaluation framework and plan, using participatory methodology. Their role will also include building the capacity of the team (especially national staff), partners and other stakeholders to be able to identify criteria to evaluate the programme at an earlier stage in the programme cycle.
17. Enhance the scope of existing internal M&E by having quantitative questions for each DAC criteria.	Accepted	DAC criteria will be utilised more in our monitoring strategy to help us look at other aspects such as efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, cohesion, and sustainability.
18. The M&E system should specify the roles that each member of staff will play in project monitoring, including frequency, focus and tools.	Accepted	The MEAL framework will outline the roles of staff and tools to be used. The team will integrate more qualitative methods into the monitoring and evaluation methodology to gain a more rounded understanding of the programme.
19. Plan how information from all this monitoring will be analysed and followed up to inform strategic project decision-making.	Accepted	Oxfam is creating a TOR to recruit a staff member to collate and analyse all internal information and recommendations. This will allow for more systematic follow-up and response from internal monitoring.
20. Regularly review complaints coming through Oxfam's comprehensive mechanism, preferably monthly.	Accepted	Oxfam is reviewing their current complaints mechanism and is developing an improved monthly analysis system as part of the new programme.
<b><i>SAVE THE CHILDREN commissioned evaluation of DFID-funded Emergency Food Security Project in Taiz, Lahj and Hajjah Governorates, May 2013</i></b>		
1. Social Welfare Fund (SWF) lists may be a useful entry point and basis for communication to communities about targeting, as the SWF is a well-known entity at community level.	Rejected	<p>SCI has found that the viability of using Social Welfare Fund lists as entry points to communities varies according to geographical location in Yemen and the perceptions of legitimacy, or not, which communities hold.</p> <p>As community acceptance was paramount, SCI took the decision to independently verify beneficiaries through a community-based approach in all three governorates. This took extra time but resulted in confidence that the most vulnerable communities were reached and avoided some shortfalls identified in the SWF lists.</p>

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		In the new DFID funded SCI project, the opening workshop emphasised strengthening the relationship with SWF lists. However, due to the quality of the data on the lists and absence of vital information required to make the lists useful for this particular project (geographically specific to the areas SCI is targeting), it is unlikely SCI will be able to use the lists for beneficiary selection. Nonetheless, Save the Children (SCI) will continue to develop their relationship with the SWF to help build the accuracy of the lists.
2. In consultation with communities, further explore the possibility of implementing livelihoods projects, including livestock based, at the village level.	Accepted	In addition to Cash Transfers, SCI will implement a livelihood intervention. This recommendation has been incorporated into the new DFID project design.
3. Ensure initiatives targeting women are premised on the understanding of women's multiple responsibilities.	Accepted	SCI's new project funded by DFID will focus on women; SCI will involve women in the committees established to best understand their responsibilities.
4. Build upon the project experience to include marginalized communities, and consider integrating protection within food security and livelihoods interventions	Accepted	SCI will prioritise inclusion of marginalized communities in all the new activities; During the opening workshop this will be emphasized to ensure new team members are aware of this priority and to ensure that the needs of marginalized are recognised and discussed. Community sessions targeting marginalized will be undertaken.
5. Strengthen data collection and analysis, particularly in post distribution monitoring, baseline and end line surveys. Invest in communication and awareness-raising efforts with programme beneficiaries and communities. For those deemed ineligible, provide clear information on the reasons for exclusion.	Accepted	A Technical Advisor from Save the Children UK will support design of the baseline survey. SCI will train project staff to efficiently and effectively collect and enter data in the monitoring system. Written targeting criteria will be presented after discussion with communities. Project staff will provide clear justification for people not selected for assistance.
6. Premise the establishment of committees and any new structures, bodies or entities on robust stakeholder analysis.	Accepted	Project staff will do robust analysis for the existing situation and interests and power relations in each community before establishing committees.
7. Consider providing committee members with a minimal allowance and/or forms of compensation to cover for time and expenses that they will sustain.	Accepted	In the grant opening meeting, SCI will discuss the possibility of providing committee members with a minimal allowance and/or forms of compensation to cover for time and expenses. Due consideration will be given to this, though SCI will also need to coordinate with other agencies including the Social Fund for Development (SFD) to determine what, if any, compensation is given to similar groups.
8. Build a relationship with the SWF and enhance intra-agency coordination using the Cash Voucher Working Group as a platform; Ensure that a cohesive approach of engagement with the SWF is developed, from country office to field offices.	Accepted	SCI will hold a workshop with project staff to openly discuss concerns, opportunities and challenges of working with SWF. In the new strategy, SCI will ensure that the approach to engagement with SWF is consistent across country and field offices. This is already in place but needs to be more clearly and more frequently communicated with the field teams, particularly given high staff turnover due to the uncertain operating environment. SCI will attend the Cash Voucher Working Group and highlight different issues.
9. Through recruitment of a food security and livelihoods advisor, ensure active and regular participation in the	Accepted	Advisor recruitment ongoing.

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Cash Voucher Working Group.		
10. Prioritise coordination with other agencies working in food security, learning and exchanging lessons on cash-based responses, including around targeting and linking up with the SWF.	Accepted	SCI will coordinate activities / learning with other agencies and share the different evaluation findings, assessments and lessons learned with different agencies.
11. Ensure that the objective of the intervention is consistently defined across documents.	Accepted	SCI will ensure using consistently defined objectives in the proposal design phase. SCI have reviewed the current DFID project as well as other projects to ensure this consistency across documents. In addition to ensuring opening meetings to explain objectives, SCI is revising induction processes for new staff joining after start up to ensure they are fully trained on project objectives.
12. Ensure that situational analysis and assessments (of needs, vulnerability, capacity, markets, are context-specific, consider gender issues, and guide the design and implementation of project activities.	Accepted	SCI will ensure context-specific situational analysis and assessments (on needs, vulnerability and capacity, market, including gender considerations) as a guide for design and implementation of new project opportunities. This is a standard operating procedure for SCI though, as with the 2012 DFID project, is not always fully feasible due to timing of donor funding. Programs are always built on available data, however, it is accepted that in the case of the previous DFID project, better data and better assessments would have improved design. For future funding, SCI has already begun improving assessments and will continue to do so.
13. Assess beneficiaries' behaviour and market dynamics, to determine voucher distribution methods accordingly	Accepted	In the new DFID project, SCI will be building upon existing knowledge, presence, and operations to roll out activities. Factors which influence project design include market dynamics, beneficiary behaviour but also include volatility and insecurity.
14. Ensure choice of transfer modality, items redeemable by vouchers and cost-efficiency considerations are tied to and in line with project objectives.	Accepted	Where Food Vouchers are used, SCI will consult with communities to decide on items they can be exchanged for.
15. Involve communities from the outset and in the identification of targeting criteria.	Accepted	Selection criteria that will be used to verify SWF lists will be adapted from community to community to include specific needs and unique tribal concerns. SCI will consult communities to ensure targeting is appropriate in that context and acceptable to the community.
16. Assess the costs (transport and others) that beneficiaries may incur when collecting assistance, and ensure that such costs are part of transfer value calculations, adjusting the transfer value during implementation, if necessary.	Accepted	SCI will consider reducing this cost through selecting the most cost efficient distribution agents/points. SCI will consider transport and other costs that beneficiaries may incur when collecting assistance in the future proposals. As needed, SCI will look at possible budget revisions in the new project to address this concern. This will be reviewed during implementation once actual costs can be calculated.