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# RESILIENCE IN THE WEST BANK

Impact evaluation of the 'From Emergency Food Security to Durable Livelihoods: Building Resilience in the Occupied Palestinian Territory' project

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Effectiveness Review Series 2018/19 - Summary

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Photo: Khaleel is a dairy farmer who has received support from Oxfam and the community cooperative, in the E1 area. Credit: Kieran Doherty/Oxfam

Alexia Pretari

Data gathering led by Sireen Hoso, Independent Consultant

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to first thank Marie Shawahina from the Palestinian Livestock Development Centre (PLDC) and Inas Mahmud Rahal from the Land Research Centre (LRC) for their involvement throughout the process of this review and for key contributions. Thanks, are also due to Oxfam staff for their involvement and critical input on the design and results: Silvia Ciacci, Majdi Al Faqeeh, Nahed Natsheh, Mohammed Ammar, Neda Heneiti and Alhassan Swairjo.

Huge thanks are due to Sireen Hosho, independent consultant, for her leadership in carrying out the data collection exercise, her hard work on a very tight schedule, and her sensitive insights. Manal M. Bader Abdul Hamid Jubeh is also to be thanked for her contribution to the questionnaire around rights, legal procedures and livestock health. Every researcher who made this review possible by gathering the data, in a very sensitive context to carry out such activity, has to be thanked here, namely: Manal Sayayleh, Hamda Sayayleh, Hiba Salfitee, Fadya Ayyad, Saeed Hamdan, Tamara Mustafa and Wala' Talahmeh. In addition, thanks are due to all of the interviewees who gave their time and fed information back for this review to be possible, at both pilot and data gathering stages.

Thanks, are also due to David Bishop for his meticulous work on the cleaning and first round of analysis of the data, to Julia Bruce for her thorough copy-editing of the Effectiveness Review report and its summary, and to Sarah Davies and Oxfam GB's publishing team for their publication.

This Effectiveness Review was conducted by Alexia Pretari, from Oxfam GB. The full report can be viewed or downloaded at the same link as this paper.

# SUMMARY

Oxfam GB's Global Performance Framework is part of the organization's effort to better understand and communicate its effectiveness, as well as enhance learning across the organization. Under this framework, a small number of completed or mature projects are selected each year for an evaluation of their impact, known as an 'Effectiveness Review'.

During the 2018/19 financial year, one of the projects selected for an Effectiveness Review was 'From Emergency Food Security to Durable Livelihoods: Building Resilience in the Occupied Palestinian Territories'. This project was carried out in the West Bank, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, between **November 2015 and January 2018** by Oxfam, together with two partners: the Land Research Centre (LRC) and the Palestinian Livestock Development Centre (PLDC).

The Bedouin people, historically pastoral and nomadic, lived in the Negev area at the creation of the state of Israel. The Jahalin Bedouin has since been displaced to the West Bank, around the illegal Israeli settlement of Ma'ale Adumim, and the Jordan Valley, and since 1967 has lived under the Israeli occupation. Following the Oslo II Agreement in 1995, the West Bank was divided into three different areas, A, B and C. The government of Israel maintains full military and civil control over Area C. In Area C, and close to East Jerusalem, the E1 area is home to Bedouin communities who are under threat of displacement because of Israeli plans for construction in the area. Bedouin communities in Area C, and in E1 in particular, have been under attack and threat of displacement for years. One way the threat materializes is through the continued issuance of evacuation, stop-work or demolition orders against specific constructions or areas, such as rangelands, issued by the Israel Defence Force and Israel Civil Administration (ICA), some of which leads to actual demolition and displacement (see OCHA (2016)).

This project was funded by the Belgian Cooperation, through Oxfam Italy. Acknowledging that Bedouin communities are facing an enduring and structural emergency that gradually deteriorates their livelihoods, the project aimed to manage the humanitarian emergency in these communities and build different protection mechanisms as a way to build resilience. In particular, the focus was placed on improving access to veterinary services, creating, or supporting the strengthening of, legal protection (sub-)committees, and rehabilitating protected rangeland. This last component was particularly challenging because of an eviction order having been issued by the ICA against some of the rehabilitated protected rangelands (287 dunums). The combination of these components is the focus of this review. A fourth component consisted of engaging key international stakeholders in challenging Israeli policies that are in violation of international humanitarian law. This joint effort around specific cases will fall outside the scope of this review.

## EVALUATION APPROACH

The Effectiveness Review, for which the fieldwork was carried out in November and December 2019, aimed to evaluate the success of the project in building resilience capacities. A quasi-experimental impact evaluation design was used to measure the effect that is causally attributable to – and representative of – the project’s cross-sectoral intervention. The evaluation design relied on comparing community members of the communities involved in the project with members of Bedouin communities from nearby areas who are thought to have had similar characteristics to the communities that participated in the project before the project was carried out. Thus 19 comparable Bedouin communities at similar ‘risk of forced displacement due to a relocation plan advanced by the Israeli authorities in recent years’, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), were identified and took part in the survey.

In both intervention and comparison communities, all households were asked to take part in the survey, if they so wished. Within each household, the survey protocol focused on interviewing the household head or spouse(s) and we introduced variation as per whether a man or a woman was interviewed within each household. The survey was composed of an individual module and a household one. In total 683 surveys were carried out in 30 communities, 268 in the intervention group and 415 in the comparison group. Half the respondents were women, and half men. Community leaders were also interviewed using a short community-level questionnaire.

To provide additional confidence when estimating the project’s impact, the statistical tools of propensity-score matching and multivariate regression were used at the analysis stage to control for demographic and baseline differences between the households and individuals surveyed in the intervention and comparison communities.

Resilience was assessed through examining 26 characteristics that are thought to be associated with the capacities to absorb, adapt or transform. A list of the resilience indicators, their distribution per capacity, and a breakdown of the results for each is shown in Table 1. Multi-dimensional indices of resilience and of resilience capacities were developed at the individual level, taking into account household-level characteristics, individual-level characteristics and intra-household dynamics (through involvement of different individuals in decision-making processes and access to resources).

## RESULTS

The review investigated the impact of community-, household- and individual-level activities on the resilience capacities of women and men. While the review draws from Oxfam's framework for resilient development, and in particular *The Future is a Choice* (Jeans et al., 2016) and the *Gender Justice in Resilience* guidelines (Sotelo Reyes, 2017), the project was developed before the publication of these frameworks, and its design focuses on improving protection around three key areas at community level: supporting animal health, rehabilitating protected rangelands and strengthening community-based legal protection mechanisms. The review investigates the impact of this cross-sectorial approach.

### **Supporting animal health: gendered participation in activities, limited impact on access to veterinary services and impact on sheep vaccination rates**

As a result of the project, in the last three years more men have received training or information on animal health (up from 6 to 12 percent, difference significant at 10 percent). This is not the case among women. While we observed no impact of the project among women respondents on knowledge of animal health, we consistently observed a positive impact among men respondents. This reflects the gender norms in Bedouin society at the time of the review: men are considered responsible for livestock and livestock health expenditure, and women's mobility and participation in community events organized by external actors are restricted, which led to men being the voluntary participants of veterinary training in the setting of this project. Specific strategies would have to have been deployed to involve women in such training, and that would require a better understanding of gender roles in livestock care.

Overall, in the intervention group in 2017 and in 2018, a year after the end of the project, almost two thirds of the respondents had livestock, and slightly more than half had access to veterinary services for their animals. According to men respondents, the project improved the share of respondents having access to veterinary services in 2017 significantly. Access to veterinary services in 2018 was not impacted by the project. At the time of the survey rates of vaccination were high in both groups, and we measured a significant impact of the project on vaccination for sheep only (vaccinated in the last 12 months). Note that the project focused on three vaccines, and the review did not go into the details of the different vaccines. However, sustained vaccination behaviours are critical for vaccines to have a long-term impact.

### **Rehabilitation of protected rangelands: a challenging implementation**

The land rehabilitation component of the project, which focused on a few communities, was challenging: while the project led to the rehabilitation of a total of 432 dunums of protected rangeland, the Israeli Civil Administration issued an eviction order against 287 dunums, and the protected rangeland of one community had to be unfenced as a result. We did not measure significant impact of the project on home-production of fodder or on usage of water harvesting for animals or access to grazing areas.

## **Strengthening community-based legal protection mechanisms: low and selected participation and negative impact on knowledge of rights**

As a result of the project, respondents are significantly more aware of the existence of protection committees or sub-committees, and more likely to participate in such (sub-)committees. These effects are stronger for men than for women. Note that overall, and on average, the share of respondents participating in such (sub-)committees is low – 11 percent. These effects are driven by two communities in which the protection committees were formalized as part of this project, these two communities are also facing a particularly strong threat of displacement. In December 2017, some community members were invited to participate in training on their rights and legal procedures, and the project team paid specific attention to inviting women. The project was successful in improving access to training, or to information on rights, or ways to document land usage among men, but not among women. In the intervention group, the respondents who recalled having participated in such training were more likely to be already involved in community groups in 2015. Both the impact result among women and the characteristics of those who recalled accessing training or information raise questions around the targeting of this activity, bearing in mind the project resource constraints. Moving forward, how could the participation of community members who are not already involved in community institutions be facilitated? And in a setting where gender norms constrain women's participation in public meetings, how could their participation be facilitated?

The project did not have a measurable impact on the knowledge of legal procedures. Men tend to have a better knowledge of both legal procedures and their rights than women. The project seems to have had a negative effect on knowledge of their rights, for both women and men. This effect is reduced when excluding two specific communities facing a particularly high threat of demolition and displacement (the project supported these communities through the creation of community protection committees). Hence, one hypothesis is that in spite of information and training received a year ago by a group of community members about international law, rights and documentation of land usage to protect their rights, the daily pressure and threat experienced by the people in the E1 area, compared to other communities at risk of displacement, seems to affect their belief in their rights and Israel's rights.

## **Building resilience: no significant impact on resilience capacities overall**

Overall, there is no evidence of the project having had a significant impact on resilience, assessed through a multi-dimensional index reflecting the three capacities of resilience. We measured an impact of the project on transformative capacity (significant at 5 percent), driven by a change in belief in collective action's effectiveness. Note that women score significantly lower than men on the resilience indices (the overall resilience index and each capacity index).

On the absorptive capacity, while there is no clear evidence of impact, the project seems to have had an impact on a few indicators. Indeed, a greater proportion of intervention respondents had confidence that the community would be able to protect itself in the case of a demolition or stop-work order being issued. However, as mentioned above, we observed a negative impact on respondents' knowledge of their rights as Bedouin living in the West Bank. In addition, we observed an impact on one characteristic that is not related to the project logic. We measured a significant impact of the project on social support networks, with a greater proportion of respondents in the intervention areas reporting either giving or receiving financial support from other households in the community at least twice during the previous 12 months than in the comparison areas. Such impact was not anticipated. There is no clear evidence of the project building access to improved water sources, which were available all year round (and intervention and comparison groups were very different

in terms of access to piped water on premises in 2015). There is no clear evidence of the project building access to remittances (which is also a characteristic of adaptive capacity). No measurable impacts were observed on livestock vaccination, income diversification, access to drinking water, access to agricultural or grazing land (also considered an indicator of transformative capacity), knowledge of legal procedures, and knowledge of animal health.

As mentioned above, there is no evidence of the project building adaptive capacity, or individual characteristics of adaptive capacity: ownership of fungible livestock, productive asset ownership, access to improved sources of water for cultivation or livestock, dietary diversity, control over the decision to sell livestock, availability of food, and attitude towards change. However, among women, we observed an impact on 'understanding of climate change', which was not anticipated as part of the project logic.

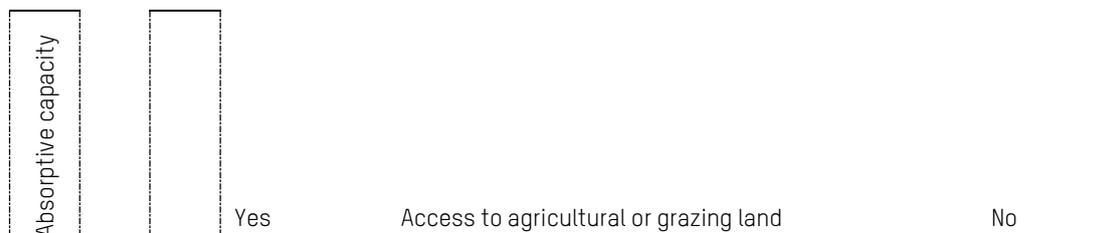
The overall impact on transformative capacity is driven by a significant impact of the project on belief in collective action's effectiveness, observed among both women and men respondents. While there is no evidence of impact of the project on women's participation in community groups, a significant and positive impact is observed among men. On the contrary, we observed a positive impact of the project among women on the political role of women. Such impact was not anticipated as part of the project logic. There is no clear evidence of the project having an impact on education of children. In addition, there were no significant differences detected between the intervention and comparison groups on the other characteristics of transformative capacity: ability to take decisions for one's own movement and participation in community activities, control over income from activities one participates in, and opinion on the acceptability of violence inside the household.

#### **Relationship between Oxfam, partners and project participants: involvement throughout the project cycle, feedback and confidentiality**

Finally, this review was also an opportunity for community leaders and survey participants to share feedback. While the former was formalized through a community form, the latter was informal, and shared with the survey team. Looking forward, community leaders highlighted the need for electricity and water services. In hindsight, however, feedback from community members stressed the lack of clarity on the project design and implementation, including on the prioritization and choices made because of resource constraints, while having high expectations because of participatory needs assessments and the high threat level and needs faced. Feedback also stressed a lack of clarity on the channels available to contact Oxfam staff. Finally, confidentiality of the data shared throughout the project, from needs assessment to this review, was a concern of respondents because of security reasons. Hence another key result of this Effectiveness Review is the need for Oxfam to review its ways of working with Bedouin community members in the West Bank. From a resilience perspective in particular, working with community members in ways that are empowering is indeed critical in order to move from dependencies to capacities

**Table 1: Indicators of resilience examined in this Effectiveness Review**

Capacity	Connected to the project logic?	Characteristic	Evidence of positive impact?
Absorptive capacity	Yes	Knowledge of rights as a Bedouin living in the West Bank	Negative impact
	Yes	Knowledge of legal procedures, documents required for the objection to military orders	No
	Yes	Animal health knowledge	No
	Yes	Cattle vaccination	No
	No	Diversification of income sources – off-farm activities and government or social benefits	No
	No	Access to drinking water	No
	No	Social support network	Yes
	Yes	The household is not relying on livestock sales in case of urgent expenses	No
	Yes	Confidence that the community/mukhtar will be able to protect itself in the case of a demolition/stop-work order being issued	Yes
		Remittances	No clear evidence
	Yes	Ownership of fungible livestock	No
	Yes	Productive assets ownership	No
	No	Understanding of climate change	No
	No	Attitude towards change	No
Adaptive capacity	Yes	(Improved) access to water for food or fodder production or animal	No
	No	Control over decision to sell livestock heads	No
	No	Dietary diversity	No
	No	Availability of food without concern	No
	Yes	Participation in community groups	No
	No	Control over income from livestock sales and livestock produce, and off-farm economic activities (petty trading, processing)	No
	No	Belief in collective action's effectiveness	Yes
	No	Opinion on women's political role	No
	No	Opinion on acceptability of violence inside the household	No
	No	Education of children	No clear evidence
Transformative capacity	No	Ability to decide for one's own movement and participation in community activities	No



## PROGRAMME LEARNING CONSIDERATIONS

### **Place the understanding of gender norms and roles and power analysis at the core of programme design and implementation**

Gender norms constrain the roles, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men, of different age, among the Bedouin people living in the West Bank. The data gathered through this review show strong gender differences within the household around decisions to sell livestock, or decisions for oneself to travel or participate in groups. It also shows gender differences when it comes to access to information related to reception of legal support or knowledge of rights and legal procedures in the absence of the intervention. In addition, the project significantly fostered participation in training or sensitization of men (animal health prevention training or rights and land usage documentation training), but not of women. The project had a stronger impact among men than among women on participation in protection (sub-)committees. Some of the results in the review also show that when participation was voluntary, people who were already involved in community groups in the past were more likely to participate than those who were not. This highlights the need to place gender and power analysis at the heart of the development of the most appropriate mechanisms to foster participation of women, and of women in different positions of power within the community in particular, as well as of community members who are further away from community institutions or more marginalized.

More generally, transforming gender relations to bring about similar opportunities to women and men will enable the resilience of the full system. This will require changing gender norms. Specific attention to these norms at programme design and throughout implementation is needed to develop appropriate activities.

### **Develop a context-specific understanding of the three capacities of resilience as a means to adopt a more holistic approach to resilience building**

Structural and recurring constraints leave Bedouin community members living in the E1 area in a state of constant coping, and thus projects have focused on immediate response and support to different coping mechanisms. This project tried to go further, through a cross-sectorial protection approach. Oxfam's resilience framework puts emphasis on the building of absorptive, adaptive and transformative capacities but was published after this project started. This review brought this framing and reconstructed a posteriori an imperfect understanding of what the three capacities mean.

Understanding what the three capacities of resilience mean in the context of Area C of the West Bank, and among the Bedouin people – marginalized within Palestinian society and at particular risk of displacement – would contribute to developing more holistic resilience

programmes. In particular, what is the space available for adaptation and transformation in this setting, and what is Oxfam and partners' role in enabling or supporting it?

Developing an understanding of the capacities and opportunities for adaptation and transformation in this setting will not only enable developing strategies to bring about resilience, but also enable the monitoring and evaluation framework to be centred on the three capacities of resilience and how the project contributes to their enhancement.

## **Consider strengthening accountability and feedback mechanisms**

Acknowledging people's agency and building equal relationships is core to bringing about resilience. Strengthening the involvement and participation of community members (beyond community leaders in particular) at programme design and throughout the programme development and implementation is one aspect of it. In particular, feedback mechanisms could be developed and integrated into programme implementation and monitoring and evaluation systems to enable communication channels and response to feedback.

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## Oxfam Effectiveness Reviews

This Effectiveness Review was conducted by Alexia Pretari from Oxfam GB. The full report can be viewed or downloaded from the same link as this paper. For more information, or to comment on this summary or the report, email [policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk](mailto:policyandpractice@oxfam.org.uk)

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The information in this publication is correct at the time of going to press.

ISBN: 978-1-78748-810-6

DOI: 10.21201/2021.8106

Oxfam GB, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford, OX4 2JY, UK.

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