ACCOUNTABILITY REVIEW IN KENYA

Evaluation of the 'Improving Access to Water Sanitation Services' project

Effectiveness Review Series 2015/16

Jacinta carries water from the new water system and management committee implemented by Oxfam and the SWIFT programme in Chokchok community. Photo: Jane Beesley/Oxfam GB/SWIFT.

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ACRONYMS

WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
AR	Accountability review
KAWASEPRO	Kakuma Water Service Providers
LOWASCO	Lodwar Water and Sanitation Company
DFID	Department for International Development
OGB	Oxfam Great Britain
MoU	Memorandum of understanding
KIIs	Key informant interviews
FGDs	Focus group discussions
MEAL	Monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
WSUP	Water and sanitation for the urban poor
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
Av	Average
WUA	Water user associations

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of Oxfam Great Britain's (OGB) Global Performance Framework (GPF), samples of projects a quarter to half-way through their lifetime are randomly selected each year in order to review the levels of accountability they are achieving. In its Accountability Reviews (ARs) Oxfam uses the degree to which its work meets its own standards for accountability as its accountability indicator. Oxfam is able to do this as it has clear standards that describe how a project/intervention/activity should be delivered by staff and partners and how it should be experienced by those for whom it is seeking change.

Accountability is one of the eleven standards that Oxfam is expected to meet in its development work. It is the process through which an organization balances the needs of stakeholders in its decision-making and activities, and delivers against this commitment. Accountability is based on four dimensions: transparency, participation, learning, and evaluation and feedback mechanisms that allow the organization to give account to, take account of, and be held to account by stakeholders. Oxfam's principle is: 'We hold ourselves primarily accountable to people living in poverty, but we take our accountability to all stakeholders seriously, and continuously strive to balance their different needs. Increased accountability will be achieved and demonstrated through respectful and responsible attitudes, appropriate systems and strong leadership.' This review assessed accountability in terms of transparency, feedback/listening and participation – three key dimensions of accountability for Oxfam. Where appropriate, it also asked questions about partnership practices, staff attitudes and satisfaction (how useful the project is to the people and how wisely the money on this project has been spent).

One of the three projects randomly selected for Accountability Review this year was SWIFT, a 3.5-year WASH project supported by DFID. The project is being implemented in Turkana County, Kenya and addresses some of the water and sanitation issues in the region, which has been experiencing droughts and serious food shortages for the past decade.

ARs employ a participatory methodology. In this instance, a total of 94 individuals took part in this assessment: Oxfam staff, partner staff (LOWASCO, KAWASEPRO, the Water Department and county government) and community members (from Kakuma, Chokchok and Nasechabuin). The review process utilised document review, key informant interviews, two workshops and focus group discussions to understand and capture insights about accountability.

FINDINGS

Table 1.1: Oxfam's score for accountability to partners – from 1 (low) to 4 (v high)

Accountability Indicator	(Average) Oxfam score	(Average) Partner score	Review Team score
Transparency	3.0	2.5	2.0
Feedback	3.0	2.5	3.0
Participation	3.0	2.5	3.0
Average total:	**3.0**	**2.5**	**2.7**

Oxfam's accountability to its partners is chiefly assessed by looking at three main dimensions: transparency, feedback and participation. In terms of TRANSPARENCY, the review team gave a score of 2 (medium). It became evident that sharing of project information with partners was limited; the 'How is information best shared?' question did not receive enough attention. Documents such as the MEAL plan, MOU, complaints handling procedures and open

information policies are available, but only partially known by partners. The detailed financial information is evidently not shared with all partners. The score for FEEDBACK is 3 (high). The score would have been higher, but the team did not see evidence of complaints being written down or reported on. In addition, the 'UWAJIBIKAJI FORUM', a complaint system used within the project, has limitations in that responses and actions are fairly slow. PARTICIPATION received a score of 3 (high) from the review team. Although it became clear from the reviewed documents and staff interviews that partners were involved during implementation, and in particular in the launching and handing over of the project. Some partners raised a concern about less engagement at the project design stage – the interview with Oxfam staff indicated that some of the partners, such as KAWASEPRO and LOWASCO, were brought on board at the last stage of submission with limited time for consultation.

Table 1.2: Oxfam and partner accountability to communities – from 1 (low) to 4 (v high)

Accountability Indicator	(Average) Oxfam/Partner score	(Average) Community score	Review Team score
Transparency	2.3	2.1	2.0
Feedback	2.3	3.2	2.7
Participation	2.7	3.5	**3.3**
Average total:	**2.4**	**2.9**	**2.7**

The review team assessed OGB's and partner's accountability to communities by assessing the same three dimensions as above: transparency, feedback and participation. The review team's score for TRANSPARENCY is 2 (medium). This is the low, but we think fair when considering the sharing of information. Only limited project information was shared, budgetary information in particular was hardly shared at all. Further, communities feel that they are not consulted on what kind of information they would like to get. All three communities had a unanimous score, 2 (medium) on transparency. The FEEDBACK dimension has a better score at 3 (high). A use of community baraza, located in the communities, provided a cheap and easy way of proactively seeking ideas, issues and listening to communities. The UWAJIBIKAJI platform as a formal complaint system provides ways of receiving complaints (but is slow as mentioned above). The score given by the review team for PARTICIPATION is 3 (high). Generally, communities' participation in the project varies considerably. Kakuma's score is 2 (medium) compared to Nasechabuin and Chokchok whose scores are 4 (very high). While Kakuma community reported limited participation and decision-making, Chokchok and Nasechabuin decided where to put a borehole, where the taps should pass, who should engage in labouring work and where to put the water tanks.

The overall main strengths include:

- Use of community structures, such as barazas, during implementation.

- Community participation during the project implementation in identifying sources of water, where the taps should pass and distribution points, as well as actual work such as labour power for the project.

- Gender consideration is a strength; women participated in many project activities and baraza.

- Complaints are addressed through both formal and informal processes and this is mainly due to good relationships and the positive interactive environment built by project staff.

Recommendations include:

- Using barazas as an avenue for promoting community-driven initiatives to enhance the sense of responsibility to the community's development needs.

- Signing of an MoU needs to involve not only the signatories, but also those mandated to implement the project during the project cycle.

- There is a need to develop a participatory feedback mechanism with participating communities targeting marginalized and illiterate groups. The system also has to capture all partners involved in the project, such as government and government agencies at different levels, community representatives and communities.
- Enhancing the understanding of the communities about the project from the beginning: who are the partners involved and what are key stakeholders' roles and responsibilities? It is only through this that issues that emerge are resolved within locally available structures even after handing over is completed.
- There is a need for greater awareness on the budget and MoU for both higher-level signatories and implementers. If this does not happen, then an information gap occurs at the implementation level, which has knock on effects for accountability and programme quality.
- Sharing of budgetary information with partners and with communities needs to be done in appropriately accessible ways: ask people how they would most like to receive the information.

2 INTRODUCTION

Accountability has become a focus of many organizations in the past decade. Organizations are increasingly interested in knowing that not only *what* they deliver is effective, but also that *how* they deliver is effective. They strive to engender a culture of accountability in workplaces in order to fulfil goals and missions and build the best relationships they can with those they work with. Building and maintaining a culture of accountability has become a goal in itself. To this end, in order to learn what works and what doesn't, Oxfam has chosen to explicitly examine **the degree to which its work meets its own standards of accountability**.

Oxfam has its own Programme Standards that describe how a project/intervention/activity is best delivered. The organization's mode of delivery considers both its staff and partner staff as important actors in how services are delivered to a community. Focus is put on mutual accountability in partnerships and joint accountability to communities as important stakeholders. Oxfam's definition of accountability is *'the process through which an organization balances the needs of stakeholders in its decision-making and activities, and delivers against this commitment'*. During Accountability Reviews (ARs), Oxfam focuses on the dimensions of transparency, having functional feedback mechanisms and adequate levels of participation from those who are affected by the project.

When carrying out an Accountability Review, Oxfam's main focus is not on measuring accountability in the context of changes resulting from the project, but rather how the project was designed and implemented as guided by accountability standards. Ideally, an Accountability Review is carried out around a quarter to half way through the lifespan of the project. The assumption around the timing of an Accountability Review is that accountable relationships would be in place by this stage.

3 METHODOLOGY

A participatory methodology was used to assess how Oxfam works with its partners and how, together with partners, they exercise joint accountability to communities. After a full document review, the review team visited project sites. In total, five country office staff were interviewed, and three communities were reached where six key informant interviews (KIIs) and six focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted, and finally two workshops were organized at the

beginning and end of the fieldwork that brought together Oxfam and partners. A total of 94 (67 community members and 27 Oxfam and partner staff) took part in the review process.

ASSESSMENT OF LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT OF PROJECT-LEVEL ACCOUNTABILITY

The assessment of leadership and management of project-level accountability was assessed through **interviews and the review of documents** with Oxfam staff at country and project site offices. Using a pre-determined tool, interviews were conducted with country office staff and project staff in Nairobi and Turkana.

The aim was to capture awareness about guiding documentation on accountability, their experience of using this guidance, steps taken to improve accountability to staff, partners and project beneficiaries, awareness about the expectations on accountability, awareness of the code of conduct, and accountability-related challenges they have experienced. Several documents were reviewed to have a better understanding of accountability areas and whether staff apply them in their everyday execution of duties as required. The Oxfam Kenya country director, MEAL manager, programme coordinator and project officers were interviewed and participated in review of documents.

ASSESSMENT OF OXFAM'S ACCOUNTABILITY TO PARTNERS

Oxfam's accountability to its partners in this project was assessed through a **workshop of for 12 participants,** coming from different organizations. While Oxfam had five staff, partners had seven members coming from three different organizations. Partners KAWASEPRO and LOWASCO were represented by two staff each and the water department from the county government office was represented by three staff. Each member was given 10 minutes to fill in their judgement on accountability dimensions.

Then three groups were formed (Group 1: Oxfam, Group 2: KAWASEPRO and LOWASCO, Group 3: Water Department county government representatives). Individuals presented and discussed their opinions in these groups before the larger group findings were presented. Results of the groups' assessments were presented on flipcharts. Oxfam staff were asked how they think they have been accountable to partners, and partners were asked to judge and discuss Oxfam's accountability to them.

ASSESSMENT OF OXFAM'S AND PARTNERS' ACCOUNTABILITY TO COMMUNITIES

The accountability of Oxfam and partners to communities was assessed in three ways: in a workshop where Oxfam and partners reflected on what they had done to ensure accountability to communities; by asking focus groups for their impression of accountability to communities; and by asking key informants a series of questions about the accountability experienced by themselves or their communities.

In terms of community's responses, six participatory FGDs (three for men and three for women) were used to capture how Oxfam and partners are jointly being accountable to the communities. These FGDs were conducted in the communities of Kakuma (13 man and 10 women), Nasechabuin (10 women and 10 men) and Chokchok (10 women and nine men).

Photo credit: Vendelin Simon/Oxfam

The age range of the participants of FGDs was 18–65 years for females and 20–70 years for males. The Ten Seed Technique was used to stimulate discussions and capture results. Each participant was given a seed, after the topic is discussed, they were asked to position their seed on a chart in relation to how well they thought various aspects of accountability were going for them. They were also asked to give their reasoning for where they placed their seed. Discussion about all the 'placements' was encouraged; often the discussions were long and the placements of seeds changed upon individual and group reflection. The process of the Ten Seed Technique stimulated discussion and kept participants active and eager to contribute during the assessment.

Photo credit: Vendelin Simon/Oxfam

In order to demonstrate how the Ten Seed Technique works two examples/practices were enacted. The review team used the example of two children, one agrees to be sent to fetch water and the other refuses. Participants expressed levels sadness or happiness depending on the case. Secondly, participants were asked to teach the review team their local dance, and then dance together. Participants then cast votes on the review team's performance of the dance. Each was asked to give reasons for score. The dancing example, in particular, allowed the focus group to experience demonstrating their judgement and opinion using seeds, and being prepared to discuss their decisions. This helped to orient the focus group when it came to the discussions around accountability. The dancing technique brought not only enjoyment, but also understanding about the exercise, and importantly proved to be a most effective rapport-building technique between the review team and members of the discussion group. Cartoons, used successfully in other contexts, facilitated thinking to some extent, but failed to bring any inputs as participants in Turkana couldn't relate to their context.

To triangulate what had been discussed in the workshop and the focus groups, a total of six key informants (three men and three women) were interviewed. These were mainly the chairmen and chairladies of the community barazas and of the water user association. They were asked to make judgement on how Oxfam and partners had been accountable to their communities in terms of transparency, listening, participation, staff attitudes, and level of satisfaction.

SHARING THE FINDINGS, ANALYSING THE RESULTS, INCREASING UNDERSTANDING AND OWNERSHIP

A feedback workshop was organized, which brought together 25 members: 18 from Oxfam, four from partners and one county government representative from the Water Department. Oxfam staff came from different projects, and this was an opportunity for other projects to learn from the Accountability Review and replicate it in their respective projects. The workshop shared the findings of the various exercises and the review team's judgement on how accountable the project was. This was an opportunity for those involved with the project or the review to understand why the review team had made the particular judgements and to discuss, debate, and influence better understanding if necessary. In addition, a two-hour feedback discussion was held with the Oxfam Kenya Country Director and the Oxfam GB WASH adviser. During the feedback workshop, the review team presented the summary of the key findings. Members jointly drew some lessons, formed a consensus and developed action points. The deliberation from the workshop was presented to the Country Director as some of the actions needed management decisions.

4   SITUATIONAL SUMMARY

Turkana is one of 47 counties in Kenya. It has six administrative units, commonly known as sub-counties: Turkana North, Turkana West, Turkana South, Loima, Turkana Central and Turkana East. It has a population of 1.2 million according to the 2009 population census. The county is located in the north-western part of Kenya and borders Uganda to the west, Sudan to the north-west, Ethiopia to the north-east, West Pokot to the south-west, Samburu to the south and Lake Turkana to the east.

Turkana County is inhabited predominantly by Turkana people, whose main economic activity is pastoralism, especially camels, cattle, sheep and goats, with donkeys as a means of transport for household goods and migration. Being an arid and semi-arid area with high temperatures,

between 20° C and 40° C, the Turkana people live alongside water sources. They get rainfall twice a year, but this is often erratic and unreliable. Those who live along rivers (Kerio and Turkwel) do small-scale agriculture, while those along Lake Turkana depend on fishing and aquatic hunting. The Turkana remain an isolated ethnic group compared to others in Kenya and they use livestock to buy grains and other needs. Accessing green pasture for livestock leads to conflict with neighbouring pastoral communities. Measurement of wealth in terms of livestock, ethnocentrism and the proliferation of illicit small arms, are causes of cattle raids in the county. The land tenure system is built on communal ownership. Individuals walk an average of 5–10 km daily looking for water; children are often responsible for fetching water.

Oxfam has been in Turkana since the 1960s. The organization now works with the poorest communities and in the most marginal areas through combined micro and macro interventions. While the micro-level interventions focus on direct investment in poverty reduction within communities, macro-level interventions are more about targeting policy and practice change at the national level. Oxfam focuses on pastoral programmes as these people are often the most marginalized groups because of climate-related challenges, such as living in arid and semi-arid areas.

Figure 4.1: Turkana County, Kenya, showing the main livelihoods
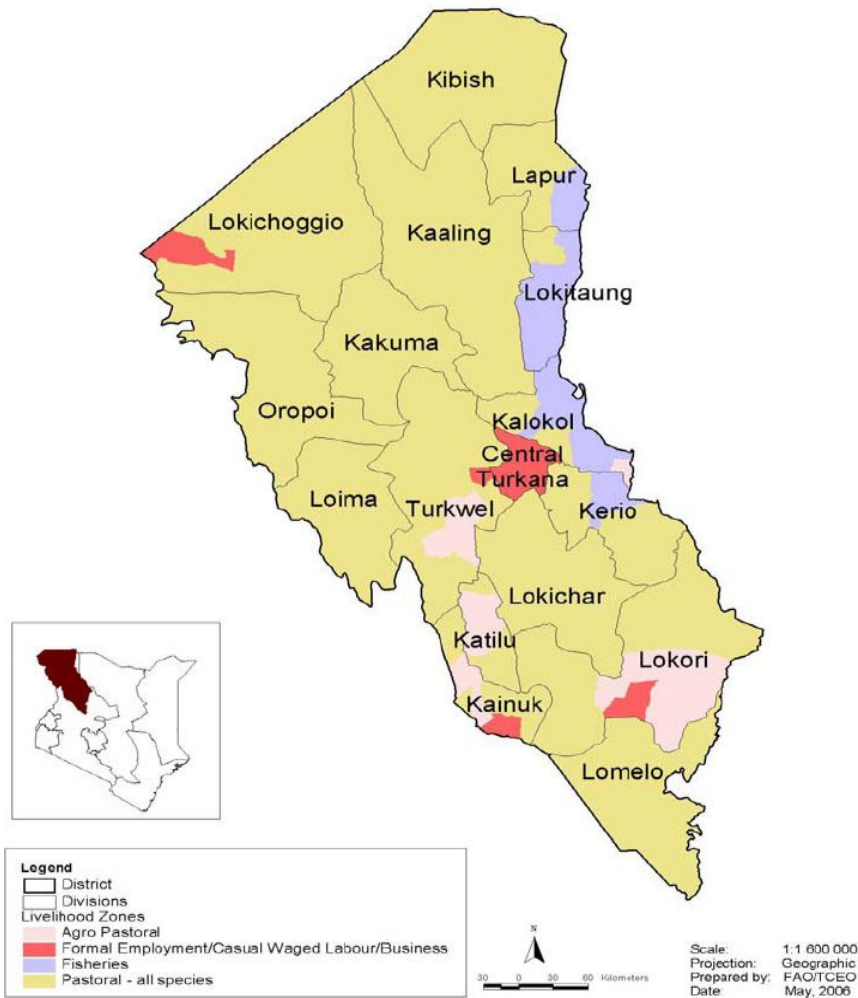
Source: UN Food and Agriculture Organization, May 2006. https://reliefweb.int/map/kenya/kenya-turkana-district-livelihood-zones-may-2006

5 SHORT PROJECT SUMMARY

Poor access to water and sanitation services has remained a big challenge in rural and urban Kenya. Its effect is not only felt by the poor majority, but also means that Kenyan rural and urban populations are exposed to health threats. Finding permanent solutions and having sustainable access to water and sanitation needs collective effort from government, stakeholders and the entire community. Initiatives by government and other actors in providing access to water and sanitation were held back by the 2011 drought that hit the East African region, the worst to hit the region in over 60 years. The combination of poor investment and continued drought means water and sanitation needs continue to remain unmet. Oxfam, through its WASH programme, supports hard-hit communities, but this is only helping in the short term. There is a need for long-term solutions that build institutions and strengthen water governance, policy and different levels of operation and management related to access to water and sanitation, in both rural and urban areas.

It is with this background, and within a changing context in Kenya through its constitutional reforms, that Oxfam has introduced a 3.5-year WASH project supported by DFID, known as SWIFT (Sustainable Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Fragile Contexts).[1] This is the project that is being implemented in Turkana County, Kenya. The project addresses water and sanitation issues in Turkana County, which has been experiencing droughts and starvation for the past decades. The county, being an arid region, experienced a severe drought in 2011 and was earmarked as having a need for more support from Oxfam and other partners to help it out of a poverty cycle. The project supports the government of Kenya in achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in water and sanitation, as well as sustainability of the project outputs. Thus, through the project, Oxfam will drill and equip 12 boreholes in Turkana; equip 10 boreholes in Wajir, with high capacity solar pumps; and upgrade an additional five water systems. The project objectives include contributing to improved and sustained WASH services for up to 20,000 people and strengthening institutional capacity to provide reliable, affordable, accessible and equitable water and sanitation services to the intended beneficiaries in a manner that is technically, socially and environmentally appropriate.

Oxfam implements the project together with local partners KAWASEPRO, LOWASCO and the county government. Communities are considered important stakeholders in the project. They are consulted, engaged during implementation, and expected to directly participate in project activities to ensure their sustainability. The project focuses on delivering services that are technically, socially, culturally and environmentally friendly.

6 HOW ACCOUNTABLE IS OGB TO PARTNERS IN THIS PROJECT?

Findings from this section were collected from Oxfam staff interviews, a document review and a joint accountability review workshop between Oxfam staff and partners. It is a general observation of the review team that has been a high level of emphasis on accountability in the project under review. This they attribute to the 'payment by results' nature of the project. This would be interesting to pursue further. By contrast, possibly, the need for the project to be delivered quickly (definitely attributable to its payment by results nature) has clearly

compromised some of the processes that would have led to increased performance against accountability indicators.

Table 6.1: Summary of Oxfam's accountability to partners – from 1 (low) to 4 (v high)

Accountability Indicator	(Average) Oxfam score	(Average) Partner score	Review Team score
Transparency	3.0 (3)	2.5 (3)	**2.0 (2)**
Feedback	3.0 (3)	2.5 (3)	**3.0 (3)**
Participation	3.0 (3)	2.5 (3)	**3.0 (3)**
Average total:	**3.0 (3)**	**2.5 (3)**	**2.7 (3)**
Partnership practices	3.0 (3)	2.5 (3)	**2.5 (3)**

Table 6.2: Scores from different partners on Oxfam's accountability to partners – from 1 (low) to 4 (v high)

Accountability Indicator	(Average) Oxfam score	Partner 1 score: local government	Partner 2 score: KAWESEPRO & LOWASCO	(Average) Partner score	Review team score
Transparency	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.5	**2.0**
Feedback	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.5	**3.0**
Participation	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5	**3.0**
Average total:	**3.0**	**2.3**	**2.7**	**2.5**	**2.7**
Partnership practices	3.0	3.0	2.0	2.5	**2.5**

6.1 TRANSPARENCY

Evidence-gathering focused on whether Oxfam shares full project information with partners in relevant and easily accessible ways. The review team was confident that a score of 2 (medium) adequately represented the degree of transparency to partners. Some aspects of 'how' the project was to be delivered were difficult to put into practice because of the urgent need to deliver a project that had been late starting. Documents such as the MEAL plan, MoU, complaints-handling procedures, and open information policies are available, but while known by staff, they are only partially known by partners. Detailed financial information is evidently not shared with all partners; the county government expressed its concern about this and, being an important actor, this signals a need for improvement. In fact, it is interesting that Oxfam staff mentioned not being able to provide full financial information and that sometimes the feedback to partners on MEAL findings is delayed. However, a closer look at the scores shows that while Oxfam, KAWASEPRO and LOWASCO gave a unanimous score of 3, the representatives of the county government Water Department awarded a score of 2 (medium) because their engagement is somewhat limited, and the MoU, which would have brought them closer to Oxfam, was signed and well known by more senior authorities, but not known by those 'on the ground'.

> *'We share information with our partners; unfortunately, there are some partners with limited information and in particular the financial details. So, score 2 from county office isn't surprising it sends a message that we need to do more in terms of sharing financial information.'* (Key informant, Oxfam staff)

> *'Before group work I gave score 2, my colleagues had reminded me of many things we have done together with Oxfam through this project, however, I now give score 3 but I think in terms of financial information there is much to be done, handing over of the project was not also properly done and this has raised a lot of complaints from the community.'* (Participant during the workshop)

6.2 FEEDBACK

Based on the reviewed documents, Oxfam staff interviews, and reflections during workshops, the review team is confident that a score of 3 (high) on feedback is deserved.

The document review showed that there is a platform for sending and receiving requests and information on different issues. While there was no evidence of any written complaints, participants confirmed during discussions that they have been sharing complaints and receiving responses verbally (face to face or by phone). There is a newly established platform called 'Uwajibikaji Forum'. It is a complaint system whereby an SMS is sent to a number (22128) and received by a coordinator. Once the message is received, it is forwarded to the responsible organization or partner for action within 14 days. This complaint system has been developed by Transparency International not only for Oxfam, but also for many partners and organizations. Unfortunately, members of the workshop expressed their concern that responses and actions are fairly slow. One partner gave score of 2 (medium), although their reasons for giving this score were very similar to the reasons given by those who gave a score of 3 (high).

> *'We have a tradition that once we have an issue we immediately communicate to our partners. We encourage mutual respect and joint planning and resolving issues. However, I still believe we as Oxfam can do better especially the way we deal with issues that come from our partners. Sometimes I feel like we are taking time handling the concerns of partners. The policy says 14 days is enough to get and resolve the issue, but look we have several projects, communities, issues, partners and there is only one person working on complaint system, he cannot handle all on time, he is also doing other works, so we are a little bit slow on this and score 3 is very fair.'* (Key informant, Oxfam staff)

> *'What I like is that Oxfam encourages you when there is a problem, however my score is 3 because I would like to see more feedback being given, so far it is not satisfactory and often responses are verbal or through telephone rather than letters or other documentation, there is no rightful mechanisms designed with partners on how to voice our complaints and feedback process.'* (Participant during workshop, LOWASCO)

What is clear from the above is that a formal text complaints system is in place, and partners know of its existence, but the verbal system is what is most used. In addition, efficacy or utilisation of the formal complaint system is questionable as the officer responsible confirmed an absence of complaints for Oxfam between November 2015 and March 2016. The question is whether there are really no complaints for Oxfam or if it is that the system is somehow not very

functional. The findings reveal that the system has not been jointly developed and agreed upon between Oxfam and partners, thus it is challenging to sustain it.

6.3 PARTICIPATION

The review team's score is 3 (high). It became clear from the reviewed documents and staff interviews that partners were involved during implementation and in particular in the launching and handing over of the project. While the feedback from partners reveals less engagement at the project design stage, the interview with Oxfam staff indicated that some of the partners, such as KAWASEPRO and LOWASCO, were brought on board at the last stage of submission with limited time for consultations. The mixed feelings and scores among partners are mainly attributable to this. The county government gave a score of 3 (high), which is fair as they were involved from the beginning, while KAWASEPRO and LOWASCO gave a score of 2 (medium) reflecting major concerns of only being involved after the project had been designed and key decisions about budget, project areas, and beneficiary communities already been made. There seems to be a disconnect between the various 'levels' of partners managing and implementing the project: although an MoU had been signed at quite a high level between all partners, its content was unknown at the project level.

> *'We have tried to engage our partners, we make important decisions jointly as well as implementation. We have often led the policy work; we have to lead the budgeting as our partner's capacity is not well developed. We have tried to offer trainings to strengthen capacities and this means in the coming phase we expect much more leading role from partners.'* (Workshop participant, Oxfam)

> *'I give score 2, I understand that Oxfam has really tried to offer support to us as an organization but this doesn't deny the fact that project design was done by them and that we are only engaged half way to the project. I also have my concern that Oxfam were not very cooperative during the implementation, they have been working with communities with less participation from us, this brings unnecessary tension between partners and communities.'* (Workshop participant, partner)

6.4 PARTNERSHIP PRACTICES

The review team gave score of 3 (high) based on evidence from the document review and discussions with Oxfam staff and partners. What was clear from documents and staff interviews at both national and project level is that Oxfam has established a mechanism for capacity building during phase two of the project and has incorporated it into project activities. Future plans are to make sure that each village has empowered water user associations that oversee sustainability of the project supported through Oxfam. As an organization, Oxfam has tried to orient partners on roles and responsibilities and put in place plans to ensure that partners grow. However, Oxfam lacks a clear exit strategy in relation to this project. Analysis reveals an interesting trend again where Oxfam and one partner's score is 3 (high) while the other partner group gave 2 (medium). The main reasons for the medium score include inadequate capacity for securing water sources and the MoU not being properly followed.

> *'My score is 2, MoU was not properly followed, before launching of the project there was no proper mobilization of the community, I also feel workmanship and security arrangement is not clear for the management of water sources. We appreciate being supported through capacity building especially workshops, forums, discussions and site visits, but these are not enough.'* (Workshop participant, partner)

Importantly, what is clear from the partners' responses is the need for clarity on partners' roles and responsibilities, especially when they take on projects that Oxfam is directly implementing in the communities.

7 HOW ACCOUNTABLE ARE OGB AND PARTNERS TO COMMUNITIES IN THIS PROJECT?

The joint accountability was captured by conducting KIIs (6) and FGDs (6). Oxfam and partners were asked to provide their views on how they think they have been accountable to the communities. Similarly, communities were asked to provide their views on how Oxfam and partners have been accountable. Therefore, the analysis of the section is based on scores during the workshop – which was attended by 14 people, KIIs and FGDs. The gender aspect was given priority during the interviews and FGDs, thus three key informants were males and three females, similarly three FGDs were with males and three with females. This means that equal numbers of women and men were reached in each community in order to have a balanced voice and judgement on dimensions of accountability.

Table 7.1: Oxfam and partner accountability to communities – from 1 (low) to 4 (v high)

Accountability Indicator	(Average) Oxfam/Partner score	(Average) Community score	Review Team score
Transparency	2.3 (2)	2.1	**2.0 (2)**
Feedback	2.3 (2)	3.2	**2.7 (3)**
Participation	2.7 (£)	3.5	**3.3 (3)**
Average total:	**2.4**	**2.9**	**2.7**
Staff attitudes	n/a	3.7 (4)	**3.7 (4)**
Satisfaction	n/a	3.6 (4)	**3.0 (3)**

Table 7.2: Scores from different communities on Oxfam and partner accountability to communities – from 1 (low) to 4 (very high)

Accountability indicator	(Average) Oxfam/ partner score	Community: Kakuma				Community: Nasechabuin				Community: Chokchok			
		FGD score	KII score	(Average) Community score	Review Team score	FGD score	KII score	(Average) Community score	Review Team score	FGD score	KII score	(Average) Community score	Review Team score
Transparency:	2.3	2.3	2.0	2.2	**2.0**	2.0	2.0	2.0	**2.0**	2.0	2.0	2.0	**2.0**
Feedback:	2.3	3.0	2.0	2.5	**2.0**	4.0	4.0	4.0	**3.0**	2.3	4.0	3.2	**3.0**
Participation:	2.7	2.5	3.0	2.8	**2.0**	4.0	4.0	4.0	**4.0**	3.5	4.0	3.8	**4.0**
Total:	**2.4**	**2.6**	**2.3**	**2.5**	**2.0**	**3.3**	**3.3**	**3.3**	**3.0**	**2.6**	**3.3**	**3.0**	**3.0**
Staff attitudes:	n/a	3.0	3.0	3.0	**4.0**	4.0	4.0	4.0	**4.0**	4.0	4.0	4.0	**3.0**
Satisfaction:	n/a	3.0	3.5	3.3	**2.0**	4.0	4.0	4.0	**4.0**	3.5	3.5	3.5	**3.0**

7.1 TRANSPARENCY

The review team is confident that a score of 2 (medium) is fair. Transparency is one of the areas where Oxfam and partners did not do particularly well. The interviews with key informants and the focus group discussions revealed that only limited project information is shared; this is especially true for information related to budgets. Although both Oxfam and partners agree that they have given communities information about the project, they also admitted that budget related information was overlooked. Communities confirm they know what Oxfam and partners do. Sharing of information is also only one-way; communities are not consulted on what kind of information they would like to receive. In this area, all participants agree with the review team – partners and communities all awarding a score of 2 for transparency. What is encouraging is that community structures, such as community barazas are utilised to share information. Community barazas and local leaders, for instance, were used to mobilize people during the launch. The communities also appear to know that it is their right to demand information concerning project: they acknowledge that if they haven't done it is so because of negligence or because finding out wasn't a priority for them.

> *'Ok! Ok! let me change my score now, initially I thought 2 but I am convinced that getting information is easy because when we have issues we ask leaders and leaders enquire for this information. We have chairman/chairlady who communicates the information to us. Sometimes the challenge is that it takes long time to get feedback and there is a channel of information flow where you cannot jump to higher levels. You have to start from the community.'* (Male, Focus Group Discussion, Kakuma)

> *'My score remains 2 because the information was communicated during baraza such that all people could receive the information. The chairman/lady tries to call us when there is a need to spread information. We know the project and we know Erupe and Audri. Often, we are told not to ask questions when Oxfam are here, we feel that we aren't given a friendly platform to express our concern to Oxfam. We get information through our leaders that Oxfam are coming and that we should behave and select what we communicate.'* (Male, Focus Group Discussion, Kakuma)

A key lesson from the project is that in this instance, the use of locally available information-sharing structures, such as community barazas, is more effective than other means.

7.2 FEEDBACK

The review team's score is 3 (high). The community barazas appear to provide the cheapest and easiest way of proactively seeking ideas, discussing issues, and listening to communities. Communities are already using these barazas to discuss their own issues and those related to the project. Secondly, the Uwajibikaji platform as a formal complaint system provides ways of registering complaints, issues and concerns that are then addressed by the Uwajibikaji committee. However, illiteracy within the community means that the Uwajibikaji platform is not accessible to everybody. The system suits those people who know how to read and write and have access to mobile phones. Oxfam and partners scored feedback/listening to communities as a 2 (medium); communities rated it slightly higher as a 3 (high). There was quite some variation between different communities' scores, however. See Table 6.2 above for greater detail.

Comparing the three communities, it seems there is a lot that needs to be done in Kakuma in terms of the community willingly and proactively seeking and also giving information. The community in Kakuma believes that the partner (KAWASEPRO) is not listening and they are often being silenced with community leaders being told not to communicate with Oxfam and partners.

> *'Communities are supposed to give complaints to their leaders, project staff would collect and discuss and address them within 14 days. We have Uwajibikaji committee that deals with complain systems.'* (Oxfam, workshop)

> *'When we have an issue, we discuss in baraza then ask our leaders to communicate with Dorcas at Oxfam. We identified water as the main problem, through Oxfam we have water now and when the pumps aren't working they come and fix. Sometimes the feedback takes time but at least generally they have provided feedback and that is why we believe score 4 is very fair to Oxfam.'* (Female, Focus Group Discussion)

The presence of community barazas in all three communities makes it easier for ideas to flow, and to pass on information, voice concerns and generally discuss project issues. Each community has a chairman and chairlady. They represent communities and are an important link between Oxfam, partners and communities.

7.3 PARTICIPATION

The review team gives a score of 3 (high) to reflect the degree to which they felt communities participated in decision-making and implementation of project activities. When scores are disaggregated by community, we see that the Kakuma score is 2 (medium) compared to Nasechabuin and Chokchok whose scores are 4 (very high). These high scores for Chokchok and Nasechabuin are because the communities decided where to put a borehole, where the taps should pass, who should engage in labour work and where to put the water tanks. The story is different in Kakuma where most of the decisions on how to run the water facility provided were made by the partner. Also, in Kakuma the decision-making on water fees did not take into consideration the position of marginalized groups, who are unable to pay for the water provided. The team also believes that scores given by Kakuma community members are lower than those in the other villages because the community is situated close to refugee camps, and water management is handled by a partner in a much more hands-on way so the involvement of the community is relatively low.

> *'We need to be clear here, Oxfam involved us and we took part in project activities, however, when KAWASEPRO took over the water project, they simply do their things without informing us.'* (Male, Focus Group Discussion)

> *'When we agreed that water is our priority, they asked us where are the wetland where we always get water, we showed them and they brought machines and drilled water. Then they asked how we would like the distribution, we told them that the village is too big and we would like to have 3 points, they did so and they invited us to make water ways especially for putting taps to the supply points. Women, youth and men all participated in the exercise.'* (Female, Focus Group Discussion)

What is also clear from the above picture, from both Oxfam staff and partners, is that they feel they fall short of community expectations. Evidence reveals that Oxfam and partners have done a fair job. However, the situation in Kakuma community isn't very appealing and there is also some 'reservation' from the community about the toilets and hygiene component of the project, for which they deal directly with Oxfam. Generally, it is evident that the pressure of delivery not only compromises the accountability, but also stresses the staff, and at times brings tension between Oxfam and partner, and partner and beneficiaries. Project staff have done very impressive work on building confidence in water user associations (WUAs) in Chokchok and Nasechabuin. The relationship between Oxfam staff and communities, even in Kakuma, is very smooth and something to be admired. However, there seems to be tension between the community and KAWASEPRO; this partner organization is evidently relatively more 'distant' from the community.

7.4 STAFF ATTITUDE

The review team's score for staff attitude is 4 (very high). The communities are very positive about Oxfam staff. However, an analysis of the findings from Chokchok shows that there are some issues that need to be resolved between Oxfam staff and communities. For instance, communities did ask for more supply sites in the neighbouring communities, and have asked for food project and even school support, but they have yet to receive answers to their requests. They live in hope of receiving what they have asked for, but some of these requests might be outside Oxfam's plans.

The scores from communities varied; for instance, participants from Kakuma community gave a score of 3 (high) and Nasechabuin and Chokchok gave 4 (very high). The score for Kakuma is expectedly lower due to the relationship that exists between the partner and the community. In fact, the community asked the review team to separate their assessment for Oxfam staff and the partner in Kakuma. Again, this is the community where the water component for the project was handed over to the partner while Oxfam continued with the hygiene and sanitation components.

> *'My score is 3 for KAWASEPRO and 4 for Oxfam staff. Oxfam staffs come to our households, they talk to us, they talk to women, men and children, we are free talking to them. They have been insisting on cleanness and they demonstrate and we understand. We are free to ask them anything about the project. My only concern is KAWASEPRO, we are not free at all and we don't see them often.'* (Female, Focus Group Discussion)

> *'I have worked with Oxfam staff on several occasions and never have I had an issue with any of them. We never quarrelled, the interaction is very good and they have a listening ear or we say here they have a long ear, an ear that listens. We have organized events together and mobilized people on cleanness and everyone just went smooth.'* (Key informant)

7.5 SATISFACTION

The average score on satisfaction is 3 (high). Interestingly, communities' scores varied more on this dimension than any other. Kakuma's low score could be due to the fact that after Oxfam handed over the water project to the partner, the community became worryingly detached from the project. Community's requests are often not listened to: for instance, destitute families, the elderly and widows could have been granted a waiver on paying for their water bills, but this hasn't happened. During FGDs, female participants angrily expressed their dissatisfaction for

elderly people being charged for their water, despite many requests from the community for this not to be the case. Also in Kakuma, project information (in particular for the water component) has not been shared with the community; everything is being done at the partner level. When the handover from Oxfam to the partner took place, a commitment was made that the project belonged to the community and should continue to do so, and continue to benefit them. The community's experience has been very negative in this regard.

> *'Water is available a bit, but not all the time and not accessible and affordable to everyone. Previously we had cholera outbreaks and it killed our children, after the project came, we rarely hear the cases of cholera. It is a big achievement and this is because of the toilets and general cleanness. Therefore, the project has helped us fight diseases.'* (Female, Focus Group Discussion)

> *'The water project has benefited the whole community but mostly women who previously would spend hours fetching and digging along Dry River surface looking for a drop of water. Water is now available but food is a big issue. We liked the fish project but it didn't last long, after one and a half year it ceased, that project helped many fishermen's families.'* (Female, Focus Group Discussion)

The community's satisfaction regarding whether money was wisely spent was very challenging. Participants in both the focus group discussions and key informants did not have much to say about the issue of budgets as they didn't have access to this level of information. In terms of likes and dislikes of the project, the communities were very positive about the project. In fact all mentioned availability of water as something they like. The communities in Kakuma appreciate most the components of hygiene and sanitation, which are still run by Oxfam. A few participants highlighted issues such as more classrooms for the schools, providing iron sheets for toilets, and more sources of water supply as things they would like Oxfam staff and partners to improve.

8   OVERALL MAIN STRENGTHS

- Strong use of **community structures,** especially during implementation. Building on existing community structures ensures greater effectiveness in reaching the desired goals in terms of accountability, particularly for projects that target vulnerable and marginalized communities.

- **Community participation** during the project implementation is very impressive. Through barazas, communities got involved in identifying sources of water, where the taps should pass, and distribution points, as well as the actual work, such as providing labour for the project. This has ensured ownership but also sustainability of the project.

- The design of the project has allowed **women to participate** in many project activities. They have representatives in community barazas. The water user associations consider the issue of gender and in particular women's voices.

- The **informal communication network** seems to be serving the purpose better than the more formal one. This is mainly due to good relationships and the positive interactive environment built by project staff.

- Linking up public–private partnership. **Engagement of the private sector** in WASH projects – KAWASEPRO and LOWASCO – brings a unique model to the development sector, but also provides a quicker way to reach the most destitute communities. Thus, the project has

set up a model that can be scaled up and is being used to influence other partners and government agencies.

9 OVERALL MAIN WEAKNESSES

- **Transparency**, especially of the project budget, has been one of the main weaknesses. The communities and some partners had received very little information on the budget for the project.

- The **formalized feedback** system lacks linkage to relevant community feedback mechanisms. The SMS system works well, but mainly for those who have access to mobile phones and those who know how to read and write. Furthermore, the majority of community members speak tribal language, and thus require a language-friendly feedback mechanism.

- There is a **lack of clarity** on what is to be shared or not with partners and communities. A checklist of issues that need to be shared by various partners and communities during the project implementation would make the sharing more effective and timely.[2]

- There is a **lack of a clear exit strategy** jointly made and agreed between Oxfam staff, partners and communities.

- Areas where there is **joint implementation caused confusion** among community members. Comparisons are made between Oxfam staff's performance and engagement with community against those of partners. A clear engagement has to be established to make communities understand the roles and responsibilities of Oxfam and partners in respective communities.

- While partnerships are strong because funding agreements and related contractual procedures are agreed mutually at the beginning of the project, and accountability issues are indicated in the agreements among other standards, **accountability has suffered** due to the pressure to implement quickly.

10 PROGRAMME LEARNING CONSIDERATIONS

- **Participation:** The community baraza appears to be instrumental in community participation throughout the project cycle. There is a need to maximise collaboration with barazas as an avenue for promoting community-driven initiatives and to enhance the sense of community responsibility for their development needs. The baraza is also a relevant platform for feedback with the advantage of accommodating community members who cannot read and write.

- **Partnership:** Documenting the partnership experience with service-cum-profit organizations, such as the water companies, becomes important for projects that target the poor and marginalized groups. By doing so, it becomes easier to identify strengths, challenges, lessons and solutions. Looked at from a broader perspective, Oxfam's programme partnership with private companies seems to be a new area, hence requiring good documentation to inform future programming.

- **Engagement:** Different partners engage in the project in different ways. The signing of MoUs needs to involve not only the signatories, but also those mandated to implement the project.
- **Feedback:** Both formal and informal feedback systems are important. However, there is a need to develop participatory feedback mechanisms with participant communities and to target marginalized and illiterate groups.
- **Transparency:** The communities' understanding of the project should be enhanced from the beginning to ensure partners are involved and to discuss and clarify everyone's roles and responsibilities. It is only through doing this that emerging issues are sorted out within locally available structures and resources, even after handing over. Additionally, it is crucial to heighten awareness on the budget and the MoU for implementers and communities as well as higher-level signatories.

11 COMMITMENTS FOR/TO CHANGE

A joint feedback workshop involving both Oxfam and partners was facilitated to validate findings and draw up an action plan for gaps identified during the review process. Emphasis was placed on ensuring the development of realistic actions that are built into the project work and recognised by the parties taking responsibility. At the time of the review, the project was approaching a second phase, which focuses on capacity building and monitoring, thus providing opportunity for addressing most of the identified gaps within interventions.

Table 10.1: The ideal accountability situation that Oxfam, partners and beneficiaries desire to achieve by December 2016

Accountability to Partners			Accountability to Communities		
Accountability indicator	Reviewer score	Desired score (Average)	Accountability indicator	Reviewer score	Desired score (Average)
Transparency	2	4	Transparency	1	3
Feedback	2	4	Feedback	2	3
Participation	3	4	Participation	2	3
Partnership practices	2	3	Staff attitudes	2	3
			Satisfaction	1	3

Table 10.2: The key action points as agreed by participants

Oxfam's accountability to partners	Oxfam and partners' accountability to communities
Transparency • Partnership agreement to be explicitly made available for staff and partners from the start of the project • Stakeholder meetings with involvement of Oxfam and community members to be done before start of the project and frequently during implementation. This to be established Feedback • Timely communication and feedback through use of fast communication channels, such as mobile phones; development of forms; and establishment of hotline for feedback questionnaires Participation • Oxfam and partners to develop a joint field-monitoring plan and intensify working together with communities in identifying needs and capturing their interests. Partnership • Review of contracts to ensure there is clear elaboration of the relationship between partners and communities, and include risks associated with the project, capacity building to partners, and beneficiaries to take lead in analysing their issues. Moreover, exit plans to be prepared by partners and Oxfam	Transparency • Have quarterly, bi-annual and annual reports from Oxfam and partners in local language (Swahili) for sharing with beneficiaries. Information, such as budget, the project itself, monitoring and evaluation results, should be shared through local leaders Feedback • To open a free line for communities to provide feedback (either good or bad) and actions to be made in a timely fashion Participation • Consultative meetings between partners, and women's and men's groups through village meetings, religious sessions, traditional gatherings and market places as a way of gathering information and views Staff attitudes • Provide contact numbers and information to communities on office location for easy access to information and to provide feedback on progress Satisfaction • Ensure participation of communities in project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluations of projects, in addition to creating CSOs/CBOs for both female and male databases in the project area and seek involvement of community groups and voiceless groups and individuals

12 EVALUATOR'S VIEW ON VALIDITY OF PROCESS, FINDINGS AND RESULTS

• Often what people say is not necessarily what they do, and this makes it challenging to know the truth about what has happened during the project cycle. Knowing and being aware of this, the review team selected the participants who took part in this review only when they were on site. Sufficient time was given to establishing rapport with community members on site to build relationships that benefited discussion. Real-life examples and songs were the main methods used to help people understand the exercise and to participate. For instance, communities would teach the review team members their local dance. The team would then perform the dance and the community voted on how good they were within the range of low

(1) to very high (4) and provide reasons for their score. This helped to stimulate thinking as well as making the whole discussion lively and building rapport.

- The gender balancing of participants meant that important aspects that affect both men and women were captured, especially participation and decision-making by women. This also meant the same issues are checked from both male and female point of view and it was possible for the review team to cross-check what was said by the women during the men's discussion and the men during the women's discussion. This design helped to streamline issues such as participation and decision-making from different angles.

- The triangulation of methods also was very helpful in determining whether what was said is really what is done. Although we cannot authenticate everything that was said, the process of visiting the communities meant we could at least see if there is water, if there are tanks, etc. Thus, we were able to see if what people said was generally the case. The team was also able to inform participants of the whole process and the need for them to be honest in their discussions.

- The feedback workshop is also important, it provided an opportunity for Oxfam and partners to see what has surfaced from the community: how they are being rated, what reasons are given, what lessons to take and, importantly, how to move forward. It is an arena where things are discussed, agreements are made and disagreements are expressed and noted.

- Generally, the process was participatory and enabled communities to openly discuss some of their concerns. For instance, members of the Kakuma community were able to be vocal about that fact they are often being silenced and told not to speak the truth to outsiders.

APPENDIX 1: ITINERARY

Date	Activity
Mon 29 Feb	9.00am–2.00pm Introductory meetings/interviews – country MEL Adviser/advisers/Country Director, and document review
Tue 1 March	7am travel to Turkana 09:30am–03:00pm • Introductory meeting – Oxfam staff, key stakeholders • finalising field logistics • document review • Staff interviews (Rose, Owino & Dida).
Weds 2 March	08:00am–2:30pm Workshop – project staff and partner staff together reflect on and discuss Oxfam's accountability to partners. PM Workshop – project staff and partner staff together reflect on and discuss Oxfam and partners' accountability to communities. *Consultants to share workshop timetable by evening 29 Feb* From 2:30pm travel to Kakuma
Thurs 3 March	Visit beneficiary communities at Kakuma–Kabokorit (08:00am–2:00pm) • 2 KIIs with representatives of local leadership/influential people knowledgeable about the project and community • 2 FGDs (1 male, 1 female) – knowledgeable about the project and community • 2:30pm travel back to Lodwar
Fri 4 March	Visit beneficiary communities at Nasechabuin (07:00am–3:00pm) • 07:00am–08:30am Travel to the community • 2 KIIs with representatives of local leadership/influential people knowledgeable about the project and community • 2 FGDs (1 male, 1 female) – knowledgeable about the project and community • 3:30pm travel back to Lodwar
Sat 5 March	Visit beneficiary communities at Chokchok (07:00am–1:00pm) • 07:00am–08:00am Travel to the community • 2 KIIs with representatives of local leadership/influential people knowledgeable about the project and community • 2 FGDs (1 male, 1 female) – knowledgeable about the project and community
Sun 6 March	Initial data analysis and preparation for feedback workshop
Mon 7 March	8:00 am–1:00pm Feedback Workshop • Oxfam staff, project staff, partner staff, key stakeholders including ideally community representatives • Presentation and discussion of findings, discussion of 'ideal' position for accountability, commitment to accountability activities. 4:00pm Consultants travel back to Nairobi
Tues 8 March	09:00am–10:00am – Interview and feedback to Country Director Travel back to Dar es Salaam

Other appendices are available upon request.

NOTES

1 SWIFT is a consortium of six agencies in Kenya (Practical Action, Concern, WSUP, Sanergy, BBC Media Action and Oxfam) led by Oxfam.

2 As outlined in Oxfam's Accountability Minimum Standards.

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