Oxfam

Evaluation of the Peace Building and Development Programme in Rwanda

Full Report

Oxfam GB Programme Evaluation

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Commissioned by: Oxfam GB

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List of Acronyms

CMT	Conflict Management Training
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EDPRS	Economic Development and Poverty Reduction
GoR	Government of Rwanda
HECA	Horn, East and Central Africa
HRD	Human Resource Development
JAF	Joint Action Forum
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government, Good Governance, Community Development and Social Affairs
MoH	Ministry of Health
NCS	National Census Service
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
NWC	National Women Council
NYC	National Youth Council
OGB	Oxfam Great Britain
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNR/CCM	*University Nationale du Rwanda*/ Centre for Conflict Management
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
WATSAN	Water and Sanitation

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

General Background
This report presents the findings of the Mid-term review commissioned by Oxfam GB Rwanda during September – October 2007. The review has been conducted a team of two experts; a Policy and Strategic Planning Specialist and a Rural Sociologist/Gender Expert. The overall objective review was to take stock of the progress made towards realising the programme objectives, so as to draw lessons for improving programme's quality, future programming and sharing. A participatory methodology was adopted, and embraced in-depth stakeholders' interviews and focused group discussions, direct field observations, attendance of community meetings and Gacaca sessions, and literature review. Field visits were held in 17 cells (14 intervention and 3 non intervention cells as control) in 7 districts in 4 provinces. District ttopographical maps were used to locate the cells before fieldwork.

Programme Context
Background
Rwanda continues to grapple with the effects of the 1994 genocide, although remarkable achievements have been made. The genocide signified a climax of the socio-political tensions and divisions that had disoriented the social-political structure in Rwanda since colonial times, left the socioeconomic infrastructure totally destroyed, too many orphans and vulnerable people; high HIV/AIDS prevalence, and a deeply divided society. While the physical and economic infrastructures have largely been resuscitated and progress made in reconciling the hitherto divided society, challenges of poverty, conflict and social vulnerability remain. These are compounded by a large proportion of young unemployed people, low literacy levels, especially among women, and dwindling economic and livelihood opportunities, especially in rural areas.

The current programme which runs from 2004 was designed on the basis of the challenges communities and Government were facing which included reintegrating demobilized soldiers, dealing with the wounds re-opened by the gacaca, and (re)settling refugee returnees. The programme builds on a pilot project in 2001, in which OGB transited from short term humanitarian intervention to longer term development programming, and has since 2004, reached 106 cells in 10 districts.

Changing political environment
The political, socio-economic and institutional environment in which the programme is implemented has changed remarkably – decentralisation is being consolidated and local governments have assumed a greater role; economic growth oriented EDPRS contrasts sharply with the previous PRSP that focussed on social indicators; *Gacaca* is winding up and Government has established Community Mediators (*Abunzi*) to reconcile while they administer local justice. And, sectoral and national development policies that guide all interventions are more solid, coherent and predictable compared to 2004 when the current programme started.

Programme Objectives and Target Groups
Targeting 150 vulnerable communities, the programme's main objectives are to contribute to:
- non-violent approaches for conflict management at individual, household and community level;
- equitable participation in governance through conflict sensitive poverty reduction projects;
- contribute to conflict sensitive implementation of the GoR's decentralization programme for good governance;
- development of conflict sensitive national level policies and plans that promote National Reconciliation and Poverty Reduction; and to
- strengthen the link between civil society actors and government in addressing national reconciliation and poverty reduction.

Main Findings:

With regard to review objectives, the main findings are summarised thus:

Relevance: The programme is highly relevant to the national priorities and community needs; has embraced livelihoods-based approach to conflict management and contributed to the integration of demobilised soldiers into civilian life. The programme has directly intervened in conflict issues complementing and implementing the Peace Building activities of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC); and is supporting capacity building of communities in conflict transformation through training and community forums.

Effectiveness: the programme approach is deemed effective in targeting poor, vulnerable and conflict-ridden communities – having reached more than 110,000 poor people in some of the remotest areas of Rwanda. Direct interventions enabled actual execution of projects. Conflict management training has helped increase understanding of conflict and peace building concepts. But the training in project management could be improved especially to address the need for adequate training, practical guides for project and financial management. Community micro-projects have provided arena to identify and resolve conflicts, and to enable individuals and households to co-exist peacefully and symbiotically.

Impact: Some of the visible impacts already realised relate to improvements in:
- Community capacity to manage / mitigate conflicts using non-violent means: evidenced by increased number of skilled and motivated conflict mediators; reduced conflicts, due declining culture of litigation, fines,; community cohesion as different people have been brought together by common interests e.g. genocidaires and genocide victims, demobilised soldiers, etc.;
- Community livelihoods: livestock provided manure, increased production up to 3 times; Produce stores increased access to seed contributing to food security and incomes, as well as increased community safety nets and disaster response capacity (e.g. famine). Among youth, a productive work culture is emerging as is among the "Batwa".
- multiple benefits for women from milling machines- family health, nutrition, incomes, etc;
- Participation of women - including old women. Women now attend meetings and can easily seek support against sexual or gender-based violence (SGBV).
- Improving local governance: local leaders' knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) in listening, resolving conflicts, etc., were reported to have increased; Practice of collective decision making are being developed; poorest communities now have (or expect to own) live assets; Corruption associated with local leaders being judges, reduced, increasing transparency & access to "justice"; and community members are now easy to mobilise and increasing contact with local leaders, because they have forums where to meet, including the poorest people who were often under-looked.

Major Challenges and Opportunities

The OGB programme faces several challenges key of which include:
- High expectations from communities & local leadership amidst small financing base;
- Political & social sensitivity of conflict & reconciliation issues
- Breaking through socio-cultural factors/ attitudes that undermine some community projects
- Geographical & infrastructure barriers;
- *Gacaca* & post-*Gacaca* situation
- Institutional capacity concerns – skill levels, resources for M&E, and reporting

But it needs to be stated that the OGB programme has enormous opportunities to make impact:
- ➢ *Continuing programme relevance* – the conflict situation that the OGB programme is addressing is only changing context but the programme continues to be relevant;

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- ➢ *Unique intervention approach* – the approach, thematic and geographical areas of OGB work are unique, and its remarkable success in such hard-to-reach areas has provided ground to make greater impact and mobilize more resources and actors;
- ➢ *The Joint Action Forum* and other formal networking structures, to build on and expand its partnerships
- ➢ *Solid presence in decentralised entities* – with well staffed and equipped regional offices in each province, OGB has opportunity to champion change, influence the development agenda and approach, and mobilise other partners.
- ➢ *Strong donor will* to support the programme
- ➢ *Clearer national and local policy context and solid institutional structures* has made the framework of engagement clearer, more predictable and supportive.

General Conclusions and Recommendations

Key conclusions from the review include are that:
- ➢ the programme is relevant and the approach has been continuously adjusted to respond to the changing socio-political and institutional context;
- ➢ the programme model is effective in reaching and ensuring participation of all people, often spreading benefits beyond the target communities. But improvements are needed to effectively include the poorest members;
- ➢ the programme has significantly impacted the intervention areas through capacity building in conflict management; genuine reconciliation and coexistence, and tangible community projects for livelihoods and income generation.

Major Key Recommendations
- ✓ **Review the approach and programme operations** to: scale down the scattered interventions and increase the capacity building support in conflict management beyond training, community mobilization and participatory project management; devolve responsibilities for managing project funds so that staff time can be freed and communities get opportunity to hold themselves accountable. There is also need to focus on a smaller area – *Umudugudu* but retain the cell as the overall intervention area at community level; and revise the training manual to make its content richer and more user-friendly; and finally, there is need to rehabilitate community assets and re-train PMC members in older cells to ensure sustainability; and make local partnerships more formal.
- ✓ **Streamline improve the monitoring and evaluation system** to make it more effective, particularly, the data collection, analysis and reporting on outcome and impact indicators; and harmonizing the data collection and reporting tools to facilitate capturing detailed and comparable data;
- ➢ **A more flexible financing regime** should be considered – so that more relevant projects that reflect local priorities are implemented with minimal conditions. In this regard, there is need to consider social projects like schools, health centres, community centres – which have greater scope for participation, are more visible and symbolic.
- ➢ **Increase knowledge and skills of staff** especially in project monitoring and evaluation, leadership and communication and documentation.
- ➢ **A strategy for advocacy and networking to facilitate working with others** should be developed and implemented to popularise the adoption of the OGB's peace building and coexistence approach at policy level as well as decentralised levels.
- ➢ **Comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and learning** system that includes documentation of successes and sharing of information internally and with external stakeholders is needed.
- ➢ **A clear, realistic yet comprehensive exit and sustainability** strategy should be implemented as part of programme support - mobilisation of local authorities, memoranda of understanding (MoUs) should be undertaken.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 General Background

Oxfam Great Britain (OGB) is an international humanitarian and development organisation working in 70 countries throughout the world. Rwanda is situated in the Horn, East and Central Africa (HECA) region. OGB has been working in Rwanda since the 1970's. In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, OGB implemented a humanitarian programme that focussed on Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) until mid 2000 when a comprehensive review of the programme was undertaken. On this basis, the programme content and approach were adjusted to suit the changing country context. A Pilot Peace Building Project focusing on reconciliation and conflict management was implemented in Ruhengeri and Umutara provinces during 2001-2002. The pilot evaluation revealed that major successes had been registered and recommended a scale-up, subsequent to which a more comprehensive, longer term programme[1] was designed in 2003.

The main objective of the current programme, implemented since 2004, was to promote reconciliation and coexistence at grassroots by increasing capacity of Rwandan communities for non-violent conflict resolution and to cooperatively engage in development and governance activities. The programme targets vulnerable and marginalized groups. Expected results were: that grassroots populations and local authorities will have improved skills and practices in relation to cooperation, participation, tolerance, and inclusion; community members and local authorities will apply non-violent conflict management methods in community poverty reduction projects; that the Government will adopt and apply conflict sensitive approaches within reconciliation and development programs; and that conflict management approaches will be integrated into civil society activities for peace building in the Great Lakes region.

The programme is coordinated from Kigali and has four field offices in the 4 rural provinces i.e. Eastern, Northern, Southern and Western. A programme review carried out in 2004 had concluded that the peace building and development approach represented good practice in the Rwandan context, and underscored the need for the skills, processes and values developed through conflict management training (CMT), to permeate to higher levels of decision-making so as to enhance good governance.

1.2 National Context Analysis

Rwanda is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 163rd of 172 countries on the human development index (UNDP 2006). According to the recent household living conditions survey (MINECOFIN 2006), some 56.9% were classified as poor and per capita GDP is approximately US $ 250. Nonetheless, the vision of the Government is to transform the country to a middle class knowledge-based economy from an agrarian one, with GDP

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[1] As the strategic focus of the OGB in Rwanda had shifted to reconciliation and development, the programme was titled *"Peace Building in Post-Genocide Rwanda: The Challenge of National Reconciliation"*

of US $ 700. The country's poverty situation was aggravated by the 1994 genocide in which up to one million people were killed and millions displaced, while the state collapsed. The genocide was a climax of ethnic divisions, among a people that share everything from language to livelihoods and culture, perpetuated since colonial times.

It should be noted that in the aftermath of the genocide, the government of Rwanda (a transitional administration formed in the spirit of the Arusha Accords of 1993), received a lot of external, support from donors, international NGOs and humanitarian organisations, to address the challenges it faced: resettling millions of returning refugees, restoring a functional state and resuscitate socioeconomic infrastructure, and restore security and rule of law. Thus, until 2000, activities of both state and non state actors revolved around ad hoc, humanitarian emergency relief. No formal programmes, strategies or policies existed to guide medium to long term interventions. Like other actors, Oxfam GB operations in Rwanda during this period were mainly humanitarian. Since 2000, however, and especially since 2003 when an elected Government was installed, there have been several developments. An important observation with regard to OGB programme is that the political, socioeconomic and governance context has remarkably changed, as indicated by the following events:

- o *Gacaca* courts established in 2003 to try genocide related cases assisted to reduce the backlog of cases but are scheduled to end with 2007. In 2005, Community based Conflict Mediators (*Abunzi*) were established by law as local judges.
- o National and sectoral development processes are now guided by sound policies and fairly solid institutional structures which did not exist or were just evolving in 2003.
- o the EDPRS is oriented towards economic growth and places higher priority on economic growth indicators, in sharp contrast to the PRSP 1 which concentrated on improving social indicators – education, health and community services;
- o the EDPRS preparation has been more participatory, with active and genuine participation of non state actors (civil society and private sector), and the process has been more open and transparent. Given Rwanda's history, signifies a major shift of Government policy to work more closely and transparently with all partners.
- o Decentralisation is now the main framework for planning and implementation of interventions. Local authorities are now key actors in regulating INGOs' operations.

1.3 The Mid-Term Review- Purpose, Objectives and Scope

OGB Rwanda commissioned this review with the overall aim of taking stock of the progress made towards realising the programme goals, to draw key lessons for improving programme's quality, future programming and sharing.

More specifically, this review was intended to:

- ➢ review the programme content, process and management todate and results being achieved in relation to the key objectives regarding changes that have taken place as a result of the programme interventions and sustainability of the impact and processes;

- assess the effectiveness of the programme process with particular attention to beneficiaries' and stakeholders' participation, appropriateness of the implementation model in light of developments further along the timeframe;
- assess the quality of monitoring and evaluation and recommend improvements;
- identify lessons learned that can be shared and used to inform best practice for peace building and development in post-conflict societies within and beyond Rwanda.

1.4 Methodology

The review has used a combination of techniques, viz:- document (literature) reviews, interviews with key stakeholders, and field observations and interactions. Field visits were held in 17 cells including 14 intervention cells and 3 non intervention cells as control) in 7 districts (2 in each province except Western where the programme works in only one district of Karongi). The key criteria for selection of cells were: location and remoteness; relative degree of conflict and poverty and level of interventions (whether phase 1, 2 or 3). Socioeconomic data and district topographical maps were used to locate and determine the cells.

The methodology for data collection is thus summarised as follows:
- *Review of documents* including the programme proposal, annual narrative and financial reports, monitoring and reporting tools, and national documents such as the EDPRS and sectoral strategies and plans on gender, decentralisation, etc;.
- *Interviews and discussions* were held with OGB staff; international NGOs; selected ministries and independent institutions. In the districts visited, the team interviewed district mayors, Executive secretariessd and other political and civic leaders at district, sector, cell and Village (*Umudugudu*) levels, Banque Populaire officials, Conflict Mediators (*Abunzi*) religious leaders and teachers, in addition to community members and project leaders (see Annex 5);
- *Direct observations* in the working environment; visits to OGB supported projects and partners. The team also attended some *Gacaca* sessions to appreciate how the proceedings are conducted and observe the general mood for reconciliation and justice.
- *Participatory meetings* were held with beneficiary communities in "mini *Njyanamas*" to hear their views and appreciate the interactive nature of the meetings, but also to triangulate transparently and reconcile different versions of information.
- *Feed-back meetings*– debriefing/ feedback meetings were held at the end of field visits with OGB field staff. This enabled to clarify some issues emerging from the field.

1.5 Structure of the Report

This report is organised in 5 chapters: Chapter 1 presents the background on and objectives of the review, including the national context, and a summary of the methodology for the review. Chapter 2 describes the programme, providing a basis for chapter 3 which discusses the main findings. Chapter 4 outlines the challenges and analyses the future perspective including options for sustainability. Finally, chapter 5 synthesises the main lessons, draws conclusions, and presents the main recommendations.

2. Oxfam GB Programme in Rwanda

2.1 Overview of Programme Content, Approach and Strategic Focus

The overall focus is to address the complex connections between conflict and poverty, to promote coexistence within communities that have suffered violent conflict. The approach used is to build capacity of individuals, groups and institutions for conflict management using constructive, reconciliatory and non-violent means. The approach recognizes the underlying causes of conflict in Rwanda as poverty, a result of inequitable access to resources and powerlessness. Thus the approach focuses on increasing options for sustainable livelihoods, and strengthening decision-making processes at community level, so as to enhance transparency and accountability and promote inclusiveness.

The model entailed 3 aspects:

➢ *Thematic focus on issues related to reconciliation*: The programme was designed to address the challenges faced in the reconcilation process viz: reintegration of demobilised soldiers, addressing wounds re-opened by *Gacaca* courts, and resettling the people internally displaced by the northern insurgency.

➢ *Direct intervention* – initiating cooperation and working directly with *Njyanama* where action is required and where impact is felt. Cooperation with local authorities and grassroots communities was intended to empower community based structures.

➢ *Spontaneous impact, incremental, roll-out approach*: From the pilot covering 20 cells, 5 districts in 2 provinces, the programme expanded to 106 cells in 4 provinces (see table 1). The scale-up to 4 provinces at the same time was to generate spontaneous impact in each of the 4 relatively diverse provinces rather than systematic scale-up province by province. The programme has supported 10 new cells in each province every year. These are intensively supported for one year, after which support is reduced to about 20% as new cells are taken on. Since 2006, however, no new cells were covered. Table 1 summarises the programme's geographical coverage.

Table 1: Mapping of Programme intervention by area and population served 2007

Intervention zone	No. of districts	No. of sectors	No. of cells	Population served (2007)
Eastern	2	16	38	28,458
Southern	3	14	20	26,231
Western	1	10	10	22,490
Northern	4	18	38	35,440
Total	10	58	106	112,619

Source: Oxfam GB Rwanda Records, September 2007

2.2 Capacity and Organisational Development of/within Oxfam GB Rwanda

OGB Rwanda programme is fully operational i.e. Oxfam staff are directly involved in the execution of all programme activities. Programme management is decentralised implying that the 4 Provincial programme offices have full responsibility and relative autonomy, within the set rules and guidelines, for execution and accountability of approved budgets.

All offices are logistically equipped with internet, telephone and radio communication facilities and have ample and secure working space. Field officers can even call Kigali via radio when in the field where telephone networks are non existent. These institutional resources constitute a solid base for the OGB Rwanda programme to effectively deliver on its objectives.

With respect to personnel and human resources, the Kigali head office and the 4 Field programme zones are fully staffed (see table A of Annex 3). Both Programme staff and external stakeholders interviewed were of the view that the present establishment is sufficient for the current work and for the foreseeable future, if the present portfolio size is not expanded.

The OGB HRD policy was appreciated from various standpoints: - short term tailor-made training courses are occasionally organised, and personnel performance appraisal is done regularly (interim six monthly and annual reviews) and on this basis, management discusses the staff weaknesses and provide support. The disciplinary system is perceived by staff as fair. Commitment and motivation among all staff categories is high, a key factor being a fairly competitive remuneration and supportive work environment.

2.3 Programme Management Arrangements

The programme is fully managed by Oxfam GB staff – 4 programme zones with 2 project officers and one Project Manager in each zone. Programme decisions are made collectively through regular management meetings, which also provide opportunity for feedback on progress. These meetings are held at different levels and inform each other:

➢ *The Senior Management Team (SMT)* is constituted of the Country Programme Manager (CPM), Programme Coordinator (PC), Finance and Programme Support Manager (FPSM) and the Human Resources and Administration Manager (HRAM). SMT meetings are held at least once a month.
➢ *Programme Management Team (PMT)* – in addition to the SMT, it includes all 4 Project Managers, the Logistics and IT Manager, and the Programme Accountant. The PMT meets quarterly to review progress, identify and resolve any possible issues.
➢ *Programme Team (PT)* – brings together the Programme Management team above, all Project officers and all Finance and Administration Officers. This committee meets twice a year, and during the meetings, each programme zone is given a platform to share their work progress, achievements, challenges and lessons leant. Weekly meetings are also held for planning and review at the field office level.

These meetings provide space to appreciate the progress made and as an accountability measure. As decisions are taken collectively, these forums enable programme managers to learn from each other. However, this requires that people open up and share information.

2.4 Developing Partnership Co-operation in the Target Communities

2.4.1 Selection of Beneficiaries and/ or Partners

The selection of the poorest cells is done with the guidance of local authorities, following agreed criteria – mainly poverty and conflict. The programme then undertakes baseline data collection, mobilisation and sensitisation of communities before funds are disbursed.

Presently, the main OGB partners in Rwanda are categorised into 4:
(i) *Njyanama* - beneficiary communities who are the principal partner/ target group;

(ii) Local authorities – collaborators and beneficiaries of the CMT training;
(iii) Service providers in baseline surveys, training and grants execution, media and advocacy work, etc. - These include individuals and institutions e.g. Centre for Conflict Management (CCM)/National University of Rwanda (NUR) Butare;
(iv) National partners – NURC and MINALOC that provide policy support and NGOs

2.4.2 Roles and Capacities of OGB Partners

Oxfam works with remote, poor and conflict-affected communities, where the level of social organisation and institutional structures is very low. Enormous effort is thus put in to mobilise and organise the community members before providing grants, then accompaniment and follow-up for the remaining period. OGB support does not target existing organised groups like cooperatives and associations, mainly because these are membership based and yet the programme is designed to facilitate inclusion of all community members. Recently, however, the conflict management training has been expanded to cover local leaders, and under phase 3, *Umudugudu*, cell and sector coordinators and Executive Secretaries have been trained in conflict management.

For CMT partners, the CCM has considerable capacity in conflict management, as they are involved in education and training as well as research and documentation, which are vital resources for the OGB programme. Similarly, Gako Training Centre is experienced and technically equipped to provide sustainable post-training follow-up to the trainees. Moreover, these institutions are nationally established and credible. The concern is that they lack financial resources to continue after the programme has stopped, raising questions for long term collaboration. For media and advocacy, La Benevolancija is an international organisation, and its collaboration may have no budgetary implications.

3. Review Findings

3.1 Relevance of the Programme to the National and Local Context

3.1.1 Changing Political and Socioeconomic Context

Since 2004 when the present programme started, major developments have occurred:

1. The political environment was defined by a transition from humanitarian period to solid development framework - a democratically elected government took over from the Government of National Unity (GNU) following the Presidential Elections of September 2003; *Gacaca* courts a key national programme for reconciliation and access to justice, had just been established; *Abunzi,* community-based dispute resolution structures were established in 2005, and, perhaps more importantly, the first phase of decentralisation implementation programme (2000-2003) had been completed resulting in creation of democratic administrative structures at all levels up to cell level. *Over this period, however, a lot has changed – more solid but larger local government structures are in place and have more capable staff, resources and clearer programmes of action than previously. Service delivery has been devolved to local levels – sectors and districts, the central government only retained policy guidance and oversight roles. Community mediators are now legally the first line of conflict resolution; Gacaca courts were working round the clock to meet the set deadline of December 2007. Local Governments after the 2006 reforms are now run by more educated, capable leaders and technocrats. Also, many refugees have returned from neighbouring countries requiring new resettlement support.*

2. From the economic and planning perspective, the first poverty reduction strategy (PRS I 2002-2005) created a coherent policy framework to guide development programmes, transiting from a humanitarian and fire-fighting arrangement that had characterised post-genocide period. Unity and reconciliation was a key flagship programme, cross-cutting all sector strategies and plans. A second PRSP – the EDPRS has since been elaborated and, unlike the PRSP I, it is more focused on economic growth sectors than social sectors that the PRSP I prioritised. It provides greater implementation roles to decentralised entities and non state actors (essentially civil society). Thus, civil society space has increased although legislation on civil society activities remains stringent.

3. *Institutional arrangements for country engagement with development partners have also changed.* Donor support appears to be increasingly stringent, and resource mobilisation has become challenging for the GoR – to the extent of calling for consolidation of INGO resources into the common budget framework. Districts are under pressure from the centre to mobilise funds for their performance contracts, and are turning to NGOs for funding.

4. Communities have re-united, more integrated and less socially vulnerable – incidences of homelessness, children missing relatives and a host of people requiring humanitarian assistance have reduced. Conflict in rural areas is now centred on livelihoods, poverty, ignorance and traditional practices that perpetrate violence against women.

The general observation is that the overall context has changed but the long term aspirations remain. While the nature, manifestation of and perceptions about the conflict has progressively

changed with the policy and institutional setting for conflict management, the overall content and approach of the OGB programme is still relevant.

3.1.2 Reconciliation and Co-existence

OGB recognised that the unique challenges of forging genuine and lasting reconciliation among the deeply divided communities in the post-genocide Rwanda required practical and innovative approaches. Most intervention agencies, including the NURC, have focussed on sensitisation, training and awareness creation which delivered the message but were not entirely effective because they lacked a practical demonstrable aspect. Through grants support to community projects, the OGB programme has created forums to bring people together, thereby fostering mutual interest-driven coexistence that is sustainable. Secondly, the approach of direct intervention and partnership at community level provided opportunity to appreciate and work directly on the problems of conflict which undermine the reconciliation process i.e. poverty and high social vulnerability, ignorance, power imbalances in communities, intrigue, etc. The focus on building community capacity to resolve conflicts is also relevant to the GoR's policy of community-driven development being promoted under decentralisation.

Programme relevance with respect to reconciliation cannot be better stated than by the words of the Director of Peace Building at the NURC, thus:

> ''*Our role at NURC role is to coordinate rather than implement peace building effort. We sensitise, train and, publish, educate, etc., but we cannot reach everywhere. Oxfam GB's work complements our work and Oxfam has been an exemplary partner and ambassador which help to implement and disseminate the message/objectives of the Commission*''.

3.1.3 Conflict Prevention and Management

All aspects of the programme, especially the CMT and communal project grants were perceived as very relevant because these directly addressed people's challenges and the issues addressed are important national priorities. Moreover, it was noted, there are very few if any organisations or Government programmes directly intervening in community based conflict management and peaceful coexistence. On account of the results already realised and the expressed need, the programme has been and is still very relevant to the national priorities and local needs. The establishment of the NURC and the creation of Conflict Mediators (*Abunzi*) at local level signify GoR's recognition that reconciliation and conflict management issues require long-term interventions. *Abunzi* have only recently been elected (in 2005) yet no tangible support by way of skills development, institutional capacity or facilitation has been provided, yet they play a big role in reconciliation. They are also too few to reach all areas.

3.1.4 Community Livelihoods and Development

From the documentation reviewed and the interviews conducted, the GoR and other development actors seem to share the view that the conflict in Rwanda has been fuelled by poverty, livelihoods and economic hardships rather than politics per say. Indeed, the official view of Government about the primary causes of the 1994 genocide was poverty and lack of good governance. Beyond promoting coexistence, the OGB programme contributes to poverty reduction by supporting communal agricultural production, income generation and food security through agro-produce, skills development, carpentry and crafts making, etc. The

strategic focus of empowering men, women and youth to design and manage community projects, and of encouraging group decision making through regular meetings and project forums promotes coexistence, tolerance and accountability, making the programme relevant to the decentralisation and democratisation process. *However, the GoR and the OGB Programme seem to differ in approach but agree on common goals. While OGB uses small grants support to create forums for building coexistence, the GoR's general view, echoed by some local government officials, is that the primary focus should be on poverty reduction. A key point for the programme, however, is that many government officials still believe that a focus on reconciliation and peace building is still needed, as it is the precondition for development.*

3.1.5 Relevance to National Policy of Participatory and Accountable Local Governance

The OGB grants support and the conflict management training are based on a series of transparent and participatory processes that start with needs assessment, democratic selection of community representatives for training and collective identification of projects for grant financing. Notwithstanding the weaknesses in the process, this approach promotes a sense of accountability, transparency and inclusiveness, which contributes to attaining the goals of decentralisation viz.: – empowering communities to identify analyse and resolve their own problems. The small grants approach by Oxfam has been commended for its practical and demonstrated nature of building community cohesion, co-existence and development.

3.1.6 Conclusions on Relevance

As noted elsewhere, the current OGB programme is relevant to the political and socio-economic environment, as the needs it responds to are still valid and the beneficiaries targeted still exist. By empowering the communities with the skills, knowledge and forums to meet and learn to coexist, the programme directly contributes to the immediate, medium and long term development aspirations, The grants not only provide opportunities to bring people together, they are providing basic assets like livestock and the much needed manure for increased productivity. Projects that targeted some of the most vulnerable people in the community have assisted to make progress in peace building and development.

So, how has remained relevant in a fast changing political environment? It has been continuously adjusted to respond to sensitive changes in the political and institutional context – e.g. the 2006 internal study on the impact of the administrative reforms informed the re-design of phase 3 interventions by increasing the size of the grants to cope with the increased size of the cells, and inclusion of specific projects for women and youth.

3.2 Effectiveness of the Programme

The programme targeted poor and vulnerable communities, and according to the programme implementation plan, it was expected to reach an estimated 50,000 direct beneficiaries annually (55% being female), and another one million indirect beneficiaries. The programme directly contributes to strengthening community mechanisms for conflict management by training existing structures for justice and reconciliation i.e. traditional mechanisms (community mediators and Gacaca judges); local leaders at village, cell and upper levels – who are most responsible for resolving local people's problems including conflicts. By training new persons of integrity (6 people per community including 2 non literate women) in conflict management, the OGB programme has facilitated the expansion of existing Conflict Management structures, in addition to creating more knowledgeable and confident cadre of conflict mediators. Social inclusion has been enhanced by deliberate targeting of illiterate women. Testimonies and observations confirm that this has built the women's confidence. Table 2 below shows the number of people trained in conflict management by category.

Table 2. Numbers of people trained in conflict management by category and programme zone

	New (selected by community			Existing Local Gov't staff			Community justice & reconciliation structures		Total
	Men	Literate women	Non Illiterate women	Village &cell leaders	Sector leaders	District leaders	Abunzi	Gacaca	
East	50	49	60	150	76	6	78	95	564
South	83	37	40	116	50	0	80	90	496
West	21	20	22	53	10	0	40	50	216
North	189	103	40	91	7	1	76	42	549
Total	343	209	162	410	143	7	274	277	1825

Source: OGB Rwanda Records, September 2007

3.2.1 Project Design and Targeting of Beneficiary Communities

Working through local authorities in problem analysis and identification of intervention areas assisted to effectively target the remotest and poorest cells within the districts, as per the Oxfam criteria. This is important considering the difficulties in reaching the target groups.

The concept of participatory planning and involvement of beneficiaries in the project design is strictly followed, as are almost all the criteria for selecting cells and within cells, projects. The participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approaches enabled generation of sufficient, accurate data on the target communities. The approach also enabled mobilisation of communities and getting them to think through their problems. However, the 4 days of training and 2 days of PRA sessions are too short to understand community dynamics and needs.

It was observed that project officers tend to strictly follow the written criteria - very limited analysis and linkage with identified problems is done, during project identification and design, and in some cases there is limited linkage between the projects identified and the baseline data. Communities need to be assisted to analyse and exploit the resource endowments around them. It is noted that there are challenges viz: OGB field staff cannot have all the technical skills needed in specialised fields like livestock production, crop farming, etc., yet the Government technocrats are too few and too poorly facilitated to complement the programme efforts.

The project selection criteria are not weighted, so the projects are checked against the criteria without relative weights or scores. For instance, if a project identified by communities is relevant to all conditions but is technically not feasible, approving its implementation without careful afterthought simply because it's the community's choice would be incorrect because it might cause a backlash or totally fail. The poultry in Nyagatare (where 50 layers were reported to have laid only 3 eggs), and the goats that are reported to be in communal shades in the Western province when in fact they are not, serve as an example. In general, however, most projects identified are approved implying that OGB and beneficiary communities agree and collaborate well.

Community Resilience and Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups: the design and implementation model used to mobilise communities and generate baseline information are effective in identifying conflict and poverty issues, identifying the most vulnerable communities, and enabling participation. Demobilised soldiers have been appreciated as a vulnerable group and effectively reached with income generating activities, skills and awareness, and the communities were sensitised to accept them. This has contributed to implementation of the National Demobilisation and Re-integration programme (RDRP).

Despite all the intensions to ensure that the projects are all-inclusive (supporting *Njyanama*, women and youth specific projects, intensive sensitisation about vulnerable people,), field observations indicate that more could be done to effectively reach vulnerable people. In Buhoro cell, Gishyita sector, Karongi district, an old woman complained that she had contributed poles to the construction of a shade but the shade was destroyed and the goats shared out without her knowledge or even receiving a goat, yet a neighbour of hers received a goat. In the northern district of Gakenke, the review team was told that project livestock were organised around clusters of communal shades grouping 10-15 households, but when an old woman in Rukore cell was asked which cluster she belonged to, her reply was stunning: *"I have never received or been told about the sheep from the project. I don't recall anybody telling me that I belong to this or that group"*. When the PMCs and cell authorities were asked to explain, they seemed caught off-guard and just promised to address the concerns.

The general observation is that although the current approach is effective in raising the profile of vulnerable people through different affirmative action approaches, the present mechanisms for social inclusion of the poor and marginalised need to be closely monitored. One a positive note, it is anticipated that the ongoing efforts to enhance the participation of vulnerable people – such as training of non-literate women, people with disabilities, local leaders, and demobilised soldiers, etc., will improve the situation in due course.

3.2.2 Effectiveness of the Tools and Approaches

The baseline studies and the mobilisation process, in general are effective in identifying and targeting all categories of beneficiaries. The main priorities of the communities are also captured in principle because they are identified in general meetings. The guiding questions for baseline do not seem to be flexible enough to allow for unique issues for different villages to

be captured. As a result, many baseline reports tend to have similar information. With regard to monitoring, the reporting is not based on the log frame perhaps because it is too general, and neither are there any set baseline indicators from which to measure progress. As a result, reporting focuses mostly on the activities and not outcomes or impact.

3.2.3 Inclusion of Crosscutting Issues in Programme Design
The crosscutting issues of concern for the OGB programme relate to the following:

i) Gender and Women's Empowerment: The programme specifically targeted women through different approaches. Women and men are equally selected for CMT as well as in project management committees (PMCs) and Organic farming skills training. In every community, two illiterate women are also selected for CMT, taking into consideration the high levels of illiteracy among Rwandan women. Since 2006 (phase 3), the programme has supported women-specific projects and encouraged women to participate in community projects. This approach seems to have been effective in targeting women - many poor and disillusioned women have been mobilized, and in all areas visited, play active roles in PMCs and as Conflict Facilitators. However, gender issues that influence conflict e.g. domestic/gender based violence, women's rights to economic assets, sexual and reproductive health, have only been lightly covered.

ii) Youth: Rwandan youth are more susceptible to conflict as they face unique challenges – unemployment, lack of productive assets. Specific consideration of youth in the programme started mainly with phase 3 with varying degrees of performance. However, youth projects tend to be considered last when funds are almost exhausted and thus receive little funding.

iii) Indigenous Communities: OGB implemented projects for the Batwa, in former Nyamugali district (now part of Nemba sector in Burera district). Because the project did not work well, and on recommendation of the 2004 review, OGB decided to implement another project in which they are integrated with other communities. But it was the experience of the Nyamugali project that provided lessons on how to target and integrate special interest groups like the Batwa. First, sufficient understanding of their socio-cultural interests is required– one cannot expect hunters to rear sheep. Second, they need to be intensively mobilised to realise the actual benefits of participating in the project. Despite facing hardships, the Batwa are still stuck with pottery, not interested in farming, and children are out of school. Finally, holistic and relatively long-term interventions need to be considered, at least 3 years, to realise considerable impact.

iv) HIV & AIDS information is specifically requested in the baseline data collection but very little analysis is done. Project activities do not specifically address HIV & AIDS.

v) Environmental Protection: Although environmental mainstreaming is not reflected in the programme documents, project activities respond to environmental concerns e.g. soil degradation (through organic farming, indoor livestock rearing, promoting of organic manure).

vi) Promoting Good Local Governance: by targeting the empowerment of *Njyanama* and building skills for community members and local leaders in conflict management and project management, the programme directly promotes reconciliation and coexistence, local accountability and other good governance aspirations articulated in the decentralisation policy.

The Main Concerns Raised on Effectiveness include the following:

- *The decentralisation reform distorted the size and structure of the Njyanama (as formerly untargeted cells were merged with targeted ones), but were not sufficiently addressed for all phases*. In projects under phases 1 and 2, beneficiary communities were told to embrace new entrants some of whose priorities may not even have matched those of the original beneficiaries. This has tended to cause discontent and in some areas resulted in new conflicts. Typical cases observed include the bickering over location of a milling machine and sharing of sheep in Rukore cell, Gakenke district and relocation of a milling machine to a less secure area in Nyagatare district.

- *Inadequate participation of otherwise more influential and important stakeholders such as teachers, religious leaders, retired leaders, soldiers*, etc., who wield influence in communities mostly because they tend to be disinterested, tend to be fully occupied elsewhere and because, they rarely attend community meetings, are difficult to reach with information. Targeting these categories of people with the training in CMT and project management, would improve effectiveness because of the influence they have.

- *Reaching the vulnerable groups* with programme benefits still needs some improvement. The review team was concerned that elderly women and men, orphans and very poor or ignorant people, who are too poor or too weak to feed the goats (or cultivate in case of farming projects) or have no voice to claim their rights, tend to be left out where goats are shared out from communal shades. In some provinces where agricultural projects have been funded (e.g. Sweet potatoes in Karongi, maize in Ruhango and Nyanza), PMC members and local leaders were cagey when challenged to explain how the elderly, weak and disabled people, benefited from such projects. This question as to how this category benefits seemed as equally strange to PMCs and local leaders as to OGB field officers, but regular monitoring and follow-up can improve the situation. ***There are, nonetheless, positive innovations from which to learn. In Burera district, for example, Njyanamas used the profits from produce stores to purchase and distribute food to poor people; livestock (sheep) are communally managed without difficulties and all people feel they own them.***

- *Communal livestock shades are not working well*: a lot of funds were invested in livestock shades especially in Eastern and Southern zones but very few have goats in them. In some instances, the shades were abandoned as soon as they were constructed. In Kabeza cell, Rwimpasha sector of Nyagatare district, one of the shades was converted into a residence by a former local leader for his son, while in the same cell one village leader removed and sold iron roofing sheets from another shade. "*it was abandoned with no goats in it, and I decided to clean it for my son's temporary shelter until I get him where to stay*" said a former Local Leader (CDC official) when asked why he had turned community property into a personal home without authorisation from the owners - community members. In the south, some of the plastic sheets used to roof the shades were removed and sold. In the West, many shades were abandoned even before completion. Communities fear or are reluctant to tell project officials the truth - they rush the goats to the shades whenever they receive communication that OGB staff would visit them or whenever they see an Oxfam vehicle (Land Rover or Land Cruiser) down a hill,

and return the goats back as soon as the vehicles leave. The reasons are as varied as they are unconvincing – cold weather in shades, shortage of grass to feed them, mobilisation difficulties, etc. Yet in some areas of East and North, livestock shades are working. In such areas, beneficiaries tend to be organised in groups of 10-15 households to ease follow-up. The manure from the droppings is left to accumulate and shared out.

- *Limited, restricted financing*: Project grants for phases 1 and 2, were reported to be very little and in some cases restricted to specific areas. Some beneficiaries resorted to second and third alternative projects because their preferred projects were not eligible. Administrative reforms compounded the situation as the project area expanded.

- *Conflict Management Facilitators are still too few to serve the entire community*. Yet their work is voluntary and most of them cannot afford transport to traverse the distant and hilly areas. The situation has been compounded by the administrative restructuring.

3.3 Programme Efficiency

Is there value for money? This section assesses whether desired results (current and more) of the OGB programme are being realised in a more cost-effective way?

3.3.1 Portfolio Size and Programme Management Capacity

The review team were initially concerned that the personnel structure was too big for the programme size. However, after visiting the field it was realised that OGB's programme activities are intensive and demand a lot of personnel time. Although the portfolio itself is considerably small, the areas of intervention are too remote and very scattered –in most programme zones, field staff require a minimum of 4 hours of travel to and from the field. And, because of the rough roads, by the staff are so exhausted that they can hardly visit many projects. Large amounts of funds are justifiably allocated to fuel, vehicle maintenance and communication. Probably due to time pressure, roll-out into new cells is associated with a tendency to abandon older cells without formal exit or preparing communities to take charge. This has resulted in mismanagement of project resources and in some cases total collapse of project activities. A case in point is the Milling machines in Umutara province which are not only dysfunctional but have been removed from the shelters constructed by the project.

All key stakeholders consulted were of the view that the present staffing levels match the programme portfolio from the standpoint of the current and projected future programme size. But while the numbers may be right for the tasks, the current perception of their work reflects under-utilisation of potential particularly in the field offices. The project officers should be doing more of planning, capacity building support, facilitating community empowerment processes (at *Njyanama* level) and monitoring and follow-up. But these are not happening as reporting is more about narrating activities rather that what change is being realised from the investments made; field visits to project sites are few and undertaken as routine tasks. Clearly, there is more that the field staff can do than what they are presently doing – but would require more analytical and reporting skills, and functioning performance management systems.

3.3.2 Direct Interventions Rather than Working Through and With Local Partners

One issue of contention about the OGB Programme is why it preferred and maintains direct presence in the districts and villages which would be more costly than supporting local partners to deliver on its programme objectives, which is the general trend for INGOs and the *modus operandi* preferred by the government. It is noted that OGB cherishes and indeed has an established partnership policy[2] with 5 principles viz: complementary purpose and added value; mutual respect for values and beliefs; clarify about roles, responsibilities, and decision making; transparency and accountability; and commitment and flexibility.

At the local level, OGB has forged excellent partnerships with beneficiary communities although the organisational level is somewhat unstructured. There are no grassroots based civil society structures with which to partner in implementing the programme. Alternative to direct execution would be to work with national NGOs, majority of whom have no connection with the target communities. Were OGB to engage and work through local NGOs, there would be a risk of losing focus and ineffectiveness because very few if any NGOs in Rwanda work with remote populations targeted by Oxfam. So the high cost of direct intervention is justified by the visible impact being realised which would not be were it to work through local NGOs. Nonetheless, as an exit and sustainability strategy, some local CSOs can be developed with strong links with local communities but motivating and equipping them to work in remote under-served areas targeted by OGB remains a daunting challenge.

3.3.3 Use of Resources Between Programme Activities and OGB Overheads

From various perspectives, the use of programme funds reflects cost-effectiveness. As much as possible, programme resources are used to achieve objectives in beneficiary communities, and there are strict control systems to observe this. OGB Rwanda maintains fixed administrative overheads and this is what is used to facilitate programme activities. It was observed, however, that this strict control tends to be "exported" to communities, where no overheads are in-built to facilitate project activities of administrative nature. Although voluntarism for community projects is good and assists to build ownership and sustainability as evidence[3] has shown, it is difficult to sustain especially where projects involve money.

However, there are some few concerns where project resources were extravagantly used: purchasing materials e.g. poles for construction of shades when such materials could be obtained locally as beneficiaries' contribution. In Karongi, it was impressive to learn that even old women contributed poles to construct Goats shades. Secondly, purchase of land for cultivation or construction of shades for milling machines indicated inefficiency since, as in the case of milling machines, the mill houses were even abandoned. In addition, a lot of funds were spent on construction of communal shades using iron sheets yet these could have been done through community efforts. In Karongi district, the project provided only roofing materials and some construction poles while beneficiaries including old women contributed

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[2] Oxfam. October 2007. *Working With Others*. Oxfam GB Partnership Policy
[3] Many of the local community programmes – Gacaca, Abunzi, Umuganda, etc., are based on voluntary contribution of ideas, time, material resources, etc, by communities, and this has helped suppress such problems as envy, mistrust and lack of cooperation.

poles, labour and space to construct shades. The risk in community constructed shades of course was poor quality as observed in Karongi but this could be addressed by engaging technicians. The idea of reallocating funds from shades to purchase more livestock could have been good if it was democratically and transparently reached, and if the shades were actually constructed. Concerns were also raised that many livestock died when the projects had purchased drugs. There seemed to have been a planning over-sight as veterinary drugs were purchased without corresponding veterinary services. In most areas, Agronomists (who double as Vets.) were not mobilised or contacted to follow-up the livestock. Notwithstanding their inefficiencies, government extension system is more cost-effective and sustainable.

Main Concerns for Efficiency
The main concerns for efficiency relate to a number of issues:- one, the scattered nature of the few programme resources – "*very small grants thrown around scattered villages in a vast district cannot create the needed impact*" (Mayors of Nyanza and Burera in separate interviews). Secondly, use of personnel time is, in the view of the review team, not efficient and does not build sustainability. Substantial amount of OGB staff time is spent on micro-managing bank and procurement transactions of community projects, as well as in resolving administrative issues. Yet these are also done in not so efficient way – some communities complained of delays in signing for funds. Field staff are often compelled to make unplanned visits to projects in order to sign bank withdrawal forms, and because of this, the monitoring visits of Oxfam staff are predictable, making it difficult to get true information. In October 2007, however, a decision was made to disengage from direct management of grant funds. Use of project funds to purchase large assets like land and buildings without sufficient funds and organisational arrangements to manage them, is another issue of concern. Such decisions take a substantial proportion of the project funds leaving very little for other more crucial activities like purchase of improved seeds, mobilisation, training, etc. A cost-effective option would be to use public services – sector land.., extension services. This has worked in Ruhango district where some cells allocated land for Cassava projects. This saves project funds, corruptive tendencies are avoided and local leaders' participation is enhanced.

Perhaps in a bid to avoid perceived bureaucratic procedures, most beneficiaries have tended to compromise standards such as procurement principles– where milling machines have been procured from unclear sources with no guarantees, no after-sale services, no formal seller contracts, and no value for money. In the procurement and installation of milling machines, local leaders were not involved and OGB staff played a bigger role, a situation that could have eroded community ownership and limited oversight role of local leaders.

3.4 Impact, Ownership and Sustainability

3.4.1 Programme Impact to Date vis-a-vis Desired Impact
The impact of the programme, although interlinked, is analysed from 2 perspectives: (a) the conflict management training (CMT); and (b) the community micro-project grants.

(a) Conflict Management Training (CMT)

(i) Increased capacity of communities to identify and resolve conflicts, resulting in community cohesion and freeing local leaders' time: Testimonies from programme beneficiaries in all the villages visited and from documents reviewed indicated that the ability of communities to resolve conflicts has increased. Although there were already Community Mediators since 2005, this was attributed to the Oxfam intervention for two reasons – the programme increased the number of elected Conflict Management Mediators/ facilitators by training more community-identified people of integrity (*Inyangamugayo*), secondly the programme trained the existing mediators (*Abunzi*), which equipped them with requisite skills to improve their self-confidence, motivation and performance levels. Because of this remarkable performance, the public trust in the Mediators has reportedly increased. Resentment and hostility that was always associated with local case judgments no longer exist. Leaders, who used to be overwhelmed by cases ranging from fights over land, rivalry over women, food theft, etc., have literary forgotten about conflicts.

(ii) And corruption that was usually associated with judgments where a local leader is a sole judge has equally declined: Numerous testimonies about how local people used to fear to report cases and how much they were likely to be asked by the leaders were narrated. The loser would be asked to pay *Inzoga z'abagabo* (men's drink), often on top of other fines. Sometimes the winner would have to pay something to the chief (cell or sector leaders depending on level) but this has all changed. In the words of Coordinator of Rubona cell, Burera district, '*We now judge cases to bring people together. Emphasis is not on who is wrong or right, or what fines should be paid, but restoring harmony among the people.*" He and other leaders in the villages visited confessed that the conflict management training had enabled them to realise the seeds of disunity they were planting with win-lose judgments.

(iii) Attitudes, knowledge, practices and skills of some local leaders towards their work and the people they serve, is changing, with qualitative change in the provision of services. The testimony of the Executive Secretary of Gishyita Sector, Karongi district, says it all: *"the training has greatly influenced my methods and approach of dealing and interacting with people, personally and professionally. I'm now more patient and tolerant and a good listener as well. The training was conducted by professional people"*.

In *Gacaca* courts, some of the Judges who were trained in the southern province confessed that the quality of their judgments have improved- that they are now more objective, have become good listeners and are able to control their instincts.

(iv) Increased confidence and participation of women, reduced domestic violence. Women narrated how previously they suffered violence in their homes because they were too shy and intimidated by local leaders who would judge the cases in public – yet they were uncomfortable to disclose domestic issues about and were under pressure not to shame their husbands. Then, when one went back, the same suffering would continue. But those who have been trained behave more professionally; women invite them to their homes where they talk to and counsel the couples. The professional way CMT beneficiaries behave has endeared them to many people and they are motivated to counsel and advise others voluntarily. One trainer in Ruhango district, reconciled with his wife reasoning that he needed to be exemplary if he is to effectively solve other people's conflict.

(b) Community Project Grants

Although it may be too early to realise lasting impact, the grants aspect of the programme have and are making real change in the beneficiary communities at household and community level. In terms of livelihoods, the projects have reportedly improved agricultural production, in some areas up to 3 times because of the manure from livestock.

Fostering Community Cohesion and Coexistence: the idea of community projects to which every household or individuals have equal stake, has helped to bring people closer to each other. It was reported that the forums created have provided avenues for many conflicting individuals and households together. Families of genocide survivors are learning to live in harmony with those of suspected or convicted genocidaires. People accusing each other bitterly during *Gacaca* sessions were seen by the review team talking calmly after the court sessions. This is not to undermine the fact that *Gacaca* challenges still remain. Perhaps no case is more telling than the women's handicrafts project in Gako cell, Ruhango district (see Box 2 below).

Box 2: Mat Weaving and Coexistence: Lessons from Gitarama

The former Gitarama province (now part of Southern province) is one of the regions with the highest genocide problems. Gacaca, which sits two days a week has added more challenges to reconciliation and coexistence. But it's also an area where the Oxfam intervention has helped to create a ray of hope.

In the Gishari cell, Kinazi sector, people rarely talked to each other or crossed each others' paths. So many women have been widowed by genocide – one group permanently because their husbands were killed, others by implication because their husbands are in prison for the last 10 years or so on genocide related crimes. The situation is really difficult for all of them as 60% are widows. But the Oxfam supported project has proved to be the catalyst they had missed to work and live together. The project provided funds some of which was used to buy and renovate an old house. A small 2 roomed house – one a meeting place and the other a store, compound serves as a meeting place not only to learn how to weave mats from palm leaves, but to share ideas and counsel each other. Those with personal problems are encouraged to open up because they work as sisters. Then they are advised and counseled and become re-energised. Unlike communal shades where getting people to feed the goats is difficult, everyone including old women who cant learn to weave have something to do. An interesting scene is where genocide widows share a seat or work on the same mat as wives of suspected genocidaires. They have learnt to forgive and to live in harmony. It's a scene where genuine forgiveness and reconciliation can be visualised. Because they have issues which do not necessarily interest men, working together has helped women value each other's company, and in the process reconcile. The benefits are more than the sales made or skills learnt – they value a forum that brings all together.

In terms of re-building a divided society, the case of Cyagaju cell, Gatunda sector in Nyagatare district which everyone testifies has changed because of Oxfam, is more informative: *"...with this heated argument, you think by this time there would be anybody seated or listening? They all would be fighting in different camps. But now, even if there is a heated discussion such as those who ate a project goat, people still stay together. This place was difficult to govern, and no leader would ever manage to get people to agree. But the Peace Building project helped unite us. The CMT beneficiaries and Abunzi have real skills of not only reconciling people but also counseling them."* This was a chorus response when asked if the programme has helped them reconcile. And the Programme Manager who had returned to work in the area (since she had been transferred to another zone), confirmed this with a smile of satisfaction. Among the beneficiaries in this area was a dark illiterate yet confident woman who enumerated 5 cases she has resolved, 2 of which had saved rocky marriages.

Testimonies from district leaders reinforce the evidence of the programme's results:

> "*Conflicts have been reduced and unity and peace achieved in communities and families, contributed to improving the gacaca process*". Mayor, Ruhango, Southern Province
> "*Peace and security has been achieved and is engine for sustainable economic development and poverty reduction*". Mayor Burera district

Grain mills are seen as symbol of development and peace which is used and bring all people of various categories. Grain mills have contributed to peace building and reducing poverty besides facilitating interaction between different people when they come to grind their grain.

Increasing Community Capacity to Develop Safety Nets and Respond to Social Vulnerability: Community projects, where they are working well, have provided opportunities to generate resources through asset accumulation and market transactions. Beneficiary communities are able to provide for the needs of the poorest in their community – orphans, elderly, poor and landless, and to respond to calamities. *In Rukoma cell in Nemba sector Burera district, the Njyanaama used profits from the food stores project to purchase and distribute sorghum and beans to famine-stricken poor residents. This way, the vulnerable groups who cannot actively participate in project activities, still feel they are part. For others, the assurance of accessing quality seeds at reasonable prices during crisis periods is more valued than even the proceeds from the sales.*

Impact on Poverty – women in communities that received milling machines claimed that by bringing milling services closer to them and has greatly improved on nutrition of children and mothers. All the communities targeted depend on agriculture for livelihoods, and their poverty is largely defined by low production due to shortage of land, exhausted unproductive soils, and disillusionment by total landlessness. Provision of quality seed, and mechanism to purchase and store seeds, renting of land to cultivate staples, and livestock that have provided manure and start-up assets directly contributed to livelihoods improvement and poverty reduction. In some areas e.g. Rubona cell (Burera district) and Cyagaju cell (Nyagatare district) almost all households had received livestock after the project livestock multiplied. Most people that had lost hope of getting out of poverty are now optimistic and the grants have taught them to work. One aspect of livelihoods that most people applauded the programme for is the fact that even the poorest people managed to acquire assets in form of livestock – areas where goats and sheep multiplied, off-springs were distributed. In some areas, particularly the districts of Burera and Gakenke, OGB supported community projects have uplifted poor people's confidence and sense of belonging so that a number of them have formed or joined savings associations.

Significant contribution towards real empowerment of rural women: The programme has empowered women to participate equally with men in managing conflicts and grant projects. Training and sensitization on gender, family issues and HIV/AIDS have raised debate and awareness, and in some instances assisted to break socio-cultural barriers that promote gender inequalities. Women now participate more actively and are outspoken, often challenging men.

Breaking idleness has reduced scope for envy and opportunity for conflict. Community projects have made people busy thereby reducing opportunities for redundancy. When people are busy with productive activity and are not idle, there is limited scope for conflict. In addition, communal projects are enabling people to value others as they have to work together.

Changing youth attitudes/ mentality towards work: Many youth projects, such as the market in Burera and the Poultry in Nyagatare and Muhanga did not work well but provided opportunity for and enabled youth to learn crucial lessons. In Ruhango district, the pineapple and carpentry youth projects have influenced a change of attitude among the youth especially young men, towards work and fostered the practice of working together. In their own words, the project improved their practical skills, and provided opportunities for them to meet and interact instead of engaging begging and in risky behaviors such as illicit sex, drug abuse, petty theft and fighting. The testimony of a satisfied Leader of the pineapple project in Matara village, Gishari cell, Kinazi sector in Ruhango district, says more:

> "*When we started, it was difficult to mobilise people. The youth here don't like cultivating although sometimes it's a problem of land. But as we progressed, other people came and wanted to join. When we resolved to charge them for the efforts we have already put in (Imibyizi) but they complained that it was too much. Since the objective of the project in the first place was to bring the youth together, we decided to charge them just Frw 500. We meet every Thursday evening to tend to the pineapples, discuss and share ideas that can develop us. We have been greatly encouraged by the Umudugudu and cell leaders, but our concern now is to get market when we harvest and funds to buy a bigger piece of land*".

Opportunities to share responsibilities between men and women: Milling machines and working on communal shades (where they exist) have reportedly alleviated the pressure of work on women. *"I can't ask my husband to grind soya or cassava on a stone, that's work for a woman even if I have no time or I'm sick. But with the milling machine, he is the one who goes there often."* asserted a woman from Buhoro cell, Gishyita sector, Karongi district.

Forums for resolving conflict and a sense of belonging – the Milling machines provided opportunity for women to talk as they queue up to mill their produce. The pigs and sheep' shades, the general meetings usually organised to discuss project issues, and the episodes of congregating around livestock shades to share manure, line up at the mill, etc., have provided opportunities to identify and resolve conflicts, thereby promoting peaceful co-existence.

Resources and avenues for community mobilisation: Local leaders including Mayors in all districts visited reported that the OGB supported projects have provided tangible assets around which to mobilise and sensitise the people on development programmes.

In general, a culture of peaceful conflict resolution is being entrenched, as is the attitude towards work and interest to work together. This is important because litigation perpetuates the cycle of conflict. Idleness creates space for conflict especially where there are few opportunities and social support systems where people help each other are not functioning.

3.4.2 Ownership of Project Activities

In all areas, it appears that local leaders, PMCs, CMT trainees and community members have a common and concise understanding of the programme purpose. They were able to recite with near precision, the stated programme goals and objectives, and could articulate programme approaches and the outcomes of the interventions already undertaken. Nonetheless, the attitudes and practices exhibited in meetings suggest that some beneficiary communities perceive grant-funded community projects as Oxfam's. A sense of ownership has yet to be cultivated, despite the tireless mobilization and sensitization efforts of field staff. Reporting is made to Oxfam but recently started sending copies to local leaders. Meetings are very often held at the request of OGB staff rather than their own initiative.

A key concern for ownership is to enlist active participation of local leaders and to integrate programme activities into local development processes. The most appropriate level is the district council where major decisions are made, although the sector is now the service delivery point. The sector implements plans agreed at district level, it has no own budget and has very few staff. However, collaboration with sector authorities needs to be stepped up.

> **Box 3: Realising Impact: What is working where, why?**
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> The review team sounded out some areas where projects were working out better than in other areas. In Rubona cell, Burera district, all the projects seemed to be working well, at least compared to other areas that it had visited. And, with respect to programme goals of enhancing peaceful coexistence, they have done excellently well. The food security (Agri-business) project which started with a grant of Frw. 1,250,000 had made a profit of about 27% and is doing well. The communal sheep project multiplied and they were able to provide each household with livestock; and had even given a neighbouring Kivumu cell some sheep so that the benefits have been spread beyond the project area. Despite the administrative reform which increased the cell three-fold, they provided 189 sheep to the new communities, who now feel they are part of the project. To promote the concept of peaceful coexistence using the small grants approach, they organise ceremonies for"*Kuziturira*" and invite sector authorities and the other communities. The sector authorities in Nemba sector where these things are happening were full of praises because through this programme, little assets like sheep are creating big things – reconciling irreconcilable. This is not to mention the impact on productivity that was reported by the beneficiaries. This is one area where the programme has generated impact that is expanding to other areas without scaling up activities.
>
> So, how do they manage to make profit where others make losses, multiply the livestock when in many areas they died, and reach other communities when others are bickering among themselves that the livestock are too few to reach all? The reasons are simple - PMC members have exceptional integrity; local leaders are involved, often more interested that PMCs; the communities have demonstrated interest and follow-up closely all project activities; and equally important, there is collaboration and follow from sector authorities. "*If we don't give a report, the people will start asking about how their project is working, and will suspect that we are embezzling their money.*"

3.4.3 Sustainability

Sustainability is a key challenge for the programme as it scales-up to bigger areas. Arguably, the CM skills and many of community projects have established a permanent mark in the beneficiary communities and on local leadership. However, the institutional capacities of communities & local institutions to take the programme forward are evolving slower than expected. Self-motivation and volunteer systems that are needed to facilitate continuity are still weak. The CMT network is yet to be operational, and Network executives in the districts visited complained that OGB had promised support but it had not yet been provided. Linking this network to district authorities will provide more cost-effective and sustainable mechanism for support. District authorities are interested in working with the CMT networks but are resource- constrained. Nonetheless, there are strong points for sustainability*: (a) there is an emerging culture of communal accountability, responsiveness and urge to work together; b) local authorities appreciate the value of peace building and development activities, which can be a springboard to advocate mainstreaming conflict issues into the DDPs and local budgets; and c) some best practice experiences have been generated by the project as reflected in testimonies and physical investments on the ground.*

3.5 Appreciation of Programme Management

1. Documentation and Learning: there are interesting experiences of best practices and powerful advocacy messages about conflict and livelihoods but they are not sufficiently documented. Yet, without sufficient documentation, information cannot be accessed to learn and influence other actors' practices within and outside Rwanda. Field activities and testimonies constitute powerful advocacy messages if carefully packaged and disseminated.

2. Working with Others as a Strategy for Cost-effectiveness and Sustainability: OGB is an active member of the INGO forum and works with other NGOs e.g. Concern, Accord, etc and share information on programming, but the links are still weak with regard to programming and implementation. Coordination with such actors as RALGA (Rwandese Association of Local Government Authorities), an advocacy capacity building umbrella, and the Land Tenure Reform Programme, which is expected to address land issues[4], is important.

3. Communication and Information Exchange Between Centre and Field Offices: the Programme Coordination Unit is required to spend 60% of the time in the field, but makes much fewer visits. The unit has one staff and there is too much work in the country office.

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[4] Land issues and the land reform policy are anticipated to increase the level of conflict, judging from the hot discussions at different levels.

4. Major Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects for Future Programming

4.1 Major Challenges in Programme Implementation

1. Political and Social Sensitivity of Conflict and Reconciliation Issues: there are perceptions among stakeholders that the reconciliation process remains a politically sensitive issue. And, because of this, civil society has carefully avoided outspoken and confrontational approach.

2. Gacaca Process and Post-Gacaca Situation: the ending *Gacaca* period was described by some stakeholders as the climax of socio-political tensions. But the post-Gacaca period is anticipated to be even more challenging for reconciliation and co-existence – unsatisfactory verdicts for genocide victims and convicts, re-integrating released genocide prisoners amidst fears of persecution, domestic violence fuelled by long incarceration of household heads, etc.

3. Geographical and Infrastructure Barriers: Working with very poor and vulnerable people, in remote areas that are under-served with virtually no communication infrastructure, is challenging. It is even more difficult where the intervention areas are scattered, so that a lot of operational time and logistical resources are "wasted" in moving up and down.

4. Socio-cultural Factors and Attitudes Undermine Communal Projects: Diverse cultural attitudes and beliefs abound about livestock - sheep, goats and cows symbolise different things in the Rwandan culture and socioeconomic setting[5], which affects the way people respond to projects involving livestock. In addition, high level of ignorance among target communities, vulnerability and powerlessness tend to slow down the process and results. The consequences are that more resources, more time and more financing are required. *A mentality of free, unaccountable handouts* entrenched in some communities by the humanitarian activities since 1994, has tended to undermine creativity and accountability of beneficiaries.

5. Institutional Gaps: the apparent unavailability of formal organisations/institutions to work with raises concerns for scaling-up and sustaining the impact created. W*ith such scattered small interventions, how can OGB scale up without competent experienced local organisations to work with?*

6. Inadequate and Inflexibility Funding: there is consensus from beneficiaries, local authorities and OGB field staff that the grants and funding scope is narrow. Continuing scale-up to new areas will be challenging when funding is limited, especially in a situation where district Mayors are in a desperate drive to mobilise funding for their performance contracts.

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[5] Goats were perceived as very domestic animals to the extent that they used to share dwellings with humans. Such sentiments still exist and make it difficult for people to share goats – to feed goats communally is something so strange for many Rwandans. It was argued that small animals like goats are easy to sell (or to dispose of) because of the low perceived value, and are easy to translate into the much needed cash, making them susceptible to being sold off. Some have argued that they take long to generate sharable amount of manure, and so motivation for communal shades is low.

- *Funding was reportedly reliable* as there is timely disbursement and honouring of approved grants. When projects are approved, disbursements are effected with minimal delays. Some beneficiaries, however, complained that sometimes their projects are approved and not funded. This, however, could be communication gap (to match available funds with projects) rather than a real problem since approval of projects is based on funds' availability.

- *Strict and inflexible accounting regulations* often compromise the quality of project design and implementation, as project personnel hasten up disbursements even when the conditions for implementation are not sufficiently in place. Cases where communities have been told to plant crops in dry seasons or livestock procured before shades are constructed have been reported. This tends to arise because of field staff fearing to lose the money as funds not used within a specified timeframe have to be returned, or inability of field staff and beneficiaries to decline conditional funds (e.g. Oxfam Unwrapped) that do not match with actual needs.

7. Staff and Partners' Capacities and Competences: There are gaps in knowledge and skills in project cycle management, among field staff. Yet their work demands specialised skills to assist communities identify and design appropriate projects, collect data and report on progress and impact, identify partners to work with and facilitate advocacy. The real challenge, however, is how to develop and retain requisite skills in an environment of skills scarcity, as there is high level of labour mobility in Rwanda. Besides the *Njyanama*, the main formal partner for OGB at grassroots level is the local government – districts, sectors and cells which have few staff and lack logistical facilitation like transport and communication.

4.2 Future Perspectives: Exit Strategy and Sustainability Mechanisms

4.2.1 Continuing Programme Relevance
A conflict-sensitive programme is still relevant for Rwanda although the nature of conflicts and the socio-political landscape is changing. In the words of the Northern Provincial Governor, "*Peace is the foundation of development, and Oxfam is still helping to develop that foundation. It should not leave the programme because Rwandese can forget the message of peace and slide back*".

In a more narrow sense of conflict in Rwanda, the context relevance entails the following:

(a) Continuing existence of conflict:
- *Gacaca is winding up, and with it there are flaring tensions* that are unlikely to be resolved. There are concerns that the post-gacaca situation will be challenging as genocide victims may not receive all the reparations that they had hoped for; re-settlement and re-integration of released prisoners which might ignite more problems;
- *More refugees have returned, and more are returning* – occasionally influencing Government priorities. Some districts (e.g. Nyagatare) have informally asked Oxfam to assist them re-settle the refugee returnees.
- *Land conflicts* are still common and are likely to increase as the land reform policy is rolled-out and the land registration process takes off. Most of the land conflicts relate to domestic squabbles for inheritance, neighbours fighting over boundaries, and illegal occupation of other people's land, especially those who had fled genocide trials.

(b) Yet capacity gaps for community/local conflict management still remain

Abunzi are at the centre of conflict resolution- all disputes are referred to them before they are handled by local leaders. District and national leaders interviewed applauded the role played by *Abunzi* and the Conflict Mediators trained by the programme. Yet their capacity is still low. It was observed that CMT is the most visibly appreciated intervention by the district officials. All districts leaders requested the programme to train all *Abunzi* and local leaders, arguing that "*they also need these skills*".

4.2.2 Options for Scale-up and Maximising Impact

The OGB management has increased the project cycle from one to two years effective phase 3. While this will increase the amount and quality of accompaniment to beneficiaries, a more realistic approach would be to scale down the number of cells taken on in each successive phase and use the resources to provide more significant support beneficiaries. The other option, which fits in with the request of local leaders, is to scale-up the CMT to cover all local civic and political leaders so that the benefits can accrue beyond the intervention cells. *In the final analysis, it is important to scale down and concentrate resources where quick and visible impact can be realised. Even if the funding were secured to extend the programme, institutional constraints exist - some key partners are concerned that it may not be feasible to increase administrative overheads.*

4.2.3 Opportunities for optimising Impact and Strategy for Exit and Sustainability

A number of opportunities exist for Oxfam to make a difference to realise its objectives:

a) Unique intervention approach – working in hard-to-reach areas has enabled OGB to make visible impact, the success stories of which are potential tools to influence other actors.

b) The Joint Action Forum: the JAF provides a forum to engage local authorities and influence their development process. Active participation in the JAF by OGB is already being felt.

c) Existing partnerships: the programme has good partnership with reputable organisations: the NURC and Rwandan Women Network (*Reseau des Femmes*) in jointly developing a Conflict Management Training manual; NUR/CCM, that provided the trainers; and La Benevolencija, from the media side, among others.

d) Decentralised programme implementation– with well staffed and equipped field offices, Oxfam has opportunity to champion change, focus on local actions, effectively mobilise other partners and influence agendas and approaches of other actors.

(e) Strong donor will to support the programme especially Oxfam Ireland.

f) A solid, supportive national development framework is in place: It is now easier to understand the national priorities and local authorities are keener to working with NGOs.

g) Learning from each other: Field offices have made unique innovations which can improve performance in different areas if shared. Monitoring committees in the North, weekly field staff schedule in the South, active ToT network in Nyagatare, etc, have created some results.

5. Key Lessons, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 A Synthesis of Key Lessons Learned

A number of lessons can be drawn from the programme implementation:

1. *Well balanced, targeted interventions* in reconciliation and coexistence can deliver quick and tangible results, but require a thorough understanding of the poverty-conflict nexus and social relations, and must address the underlying links between conflict and poverty.

2. *Working with and through local leadership* can help better identification and targeting of communities with real needs, but large groups can be difficult to target. Areas where livestock shades are working have distributed them into clusters of 10-15 households.

3. *Direct interventions* may be costly and time consuming but in remote areas where few local NGOs are willing to work, this may be the only effective way to reach the target groups.

4. *Reporting and feedback* are critical to programme performance. When reporting is incomplete or irregular, feed-back slow, there are management and programming difficulties.

5. Finally, *reaching poor, isolated communities requires strong commitment, motivation and collaborative efforts* of other actors.

5.2 Conclusions

The rationale for simultaneous scale-up to 4 provinces at the start of the programme was to create impact over a large socio-economically diverse area, much faster.

- o the policy and operational context has changed over the programme implementation period, but the thematic focus remains relevant –largely due to continuous adjustment.
- o the design and implementation model is effective in reaching the target groups and ensuring participation of stakeholders. Direct partnership with the *Njyanama*, involvement of local authorities, and practical community projects that bring together conflict people, constitute a unique lesson to replicate elsewhere. But more could be done to enhance inclusion of extremely poor and vulnerable people;
- o the programme has generated significant impact in the intervention areas – on coexistence and conflict management, collective efforts in poverty reduction and conflict resolution. There is a multiplier effect – where the programme benefits have been extended to cells outside the intervention area;
- o A pool of skills and knowledge on conflict management has been developed right where they are needed – communities, but appropriate mechanisms to ensure that such skills are sustained beyond the programme are inadequate.
- o Finally, there is scope for scale-up and duplication of lessons learnt elsewhere.

5.3 Recommendations

A number of recommendations are made by this review:

1. ***Improve the process and quality of results from baseline surveys***: Recommended actions include:
   - ✓ Design and use standard data collection tools and techniques to facilitate monitoring and follow-up as well as comparison of information from different areas. Share data collection tools (questionnaires, checklists,..) with external stakeholders e.g. Oxfam Ireland and the OGB regional office to improve quality and completeness;

✓ PRAs should be facilitated by external people – trained facilitators could be exchanged so that they don't facilitate in their own villages to avoid bias.

✓ more time should be allocated to PRAs to allow people to objectively analyse their problems and issues and to get as more people involved as possible.

✓ more analytical work is needed to translate the data into useful information for decision making and for formulating performance benchmarks.

✓ Make use of data already collected under such programmes as Ubudehe, CDCs, etc to avoid duplication and to triangulate/ validate the data from the field.

✓ Field staff should actively participate in the data collection process to familiarise them with the process and to know the communities they plan to work with.

2. Review the Programme Model– scale-down spatially to concentrate resources, and increase timeframe for the project cycle – review the approach from small scattered projects to fewer, well funded and sufficiently supported communities to realise visible and faster impact. Cluster of *Imidugudu*/ cells should be supported for a given period, then take experiences to another cluster after clear lessons of what works under what conditions. At least 3 years of continuous work with a community: year 1 for mobilisation, planning and CMT; year 2 for actual implementation and participatory monitoring; and year 3 for evaluation, re-training and exit.

3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning System: There is need to improve the monitoring and evaluation system to make it more effective:

- *Improve reporting with increased focus on outcome and impact, beyond the narration of events/ activities.* Focus on set targets and indicators in the logframe.
- *Data collection systems, procedures and tools* should also be reviewed, especially at field level. Relying on some members of the PMCs, local leaders and CMT trainers/ facilitators for reports, has risks of getting wrong information, so, all field reports should be verified.
- *Analytical tools need to be improved and diversified* – data collection and reporting formats should be uniform and made more holistic – to capture detailed and comparable data.

4. Documentation and Knowledge Management and Learning: OGB Kigali should champion documentation by expanding and equipping it its resource centre and ensuring accessibility of useful programme materials. Decentralising documentation to field offices will enhance access to information on innovations and best practices on programme activities. Some funds need to be set aside, train and facilitate staff in documentation and archiving. *Each field office could be asked to document success stories demonstrating how and where grant-support and CMT are enhancing coexistence and peace and disseminate them in programme news.*

5. Strengthen Partnership with Other Actors, and Mobilise Support from External Stakeholders: a shift in thinking, practice, attitudes and culture is required, from "doing" to "facilitating the doing", to mobilise and work with others. While OGB's main focus remains to identify, mobilise and support poor communities that are isolated and "hard-to-reach", it can highlight their needs and mobilise new partners. In addition, timely and supportive feedback from external stakeholders, particularly the regional and international office, Oxfam Ireland, etc., will be essential to improving systems, procedures and practices and should be provided.

6. Step-up Grants that Specifically Target Women and Youth Projects, and Consider Larger Community Projects: continued affirmative action for youth and women will build their confidence, experience and interest, and enable them participate more equitably. Health centres, schools and community centres have demonstrated potential to bring more people closer, impact greater areas outside target communities, and are more visible symbols of

coexistence. They are also on Government and community priorities, as was observed from the local requests to field staff in the East, South and West. OGB should evaluate their viability in light of the high costs involved, and drawing from the previous experience.

7. *The Training Approach and Content Should be Reviewed to*:
- ➢ Include transparency, accountability, leadership and communication techniques and other attributes of reconciliation and conflict management, in the training content;
- ➢ Make training materials more user-friendly - provide more illustrations and reduce the text; review the layout to make it more attractive; include more local real life situations; and increase exercises for role plays and practical work. Simplify manuals and provide more training aides- posters, flyers, especially for non literate trainees/ trainers.
- ➢ Institute a post-training track and support system for training beneficiaries – what challenges they face and how they can improve their performance.

8. *Expand the Conflict Management Training* to benefit more people and all leaders in conflict-sensitive positions - e.g. Local leaders, *Abunzi*, Land committees, and other local structures involved in conflict resolution and peace building.

9. *More Innovative Approaches to Effectively Reach Vulnerable Groups*: mechanisms are needed to ensure more specific targeting of vulnerable groups (particularly elderly, orphans, people with disabilities and very poor landless people). Regular follow-up is important, as is provision of some incentives (e.g. additional funds) where efforts are made to reach.

10. *More Flexible Financing of Projects is Needed* – to avoid incidences where communities are compelled (by their circumstances) to undertake projects that do not match with their needs. Secondly, an adaptable approach is needed to facilitate prudent financial decision making within and between field offices or projects. Disbursement procedures and communication on processes between Kigali and field offices should be improved to ensure reliability and timeliness. Consider community contribution as a grant conditionality to foster ownership.

11. *Review the Role of Oxfam in Community Projects – Concentrate on Support and Oversight*: OGB staff disengagement from managing project funds should be hastened[6], as should in procurement. Experience and field evidence suggests that ownership and sustainability are enhanced if beneficiaries are left to independently manage their own activities.

12. *Advocacy, Partnerships and Strategic Alliance Building*: A clear advocacy strategy should be developed and implemented. Influencing where and how other actors' work should help Oxfam scale-up its operations rather than scaling up projects without sufficient funds. There are opportunities for this – OGB already has in-depth knowledge of and social bonding with some of the remotest, poorest and most vulnerable communities in Rwanda.

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[6] A more viable option is to make PMU members signatories to the accounts, with a gender balance, but all bank transactions should be authorised and/ or approved by Cell and Sector Executive Secretaries in writing. Banque Populaire should be provided with a list of conditions for bank transactions. Local authorities, PMCs and bank authorities said it would work. The Executif of Nemba sector argued that this would compel their internal auditor to regularly visit the projects, because their signature implicates them in all transactions.

13. Strengthen Capacity of OGB Staff and Partners: Capacity building requirements entail: *Improving skills and knowledge of staff* in project identification and appraisal, monitoring and evaluation, leadership and communication, advocacy and networking, policy analysis, data collection, analysis and report writing; A process approach that focuses on jointly identifying the gaps and providing focused practical oriented training (on-the-job, delivering results), is more appropriate because it will improve knowledge and skills, as well as values, attitudes and practices required to translate skills and knowledge into results.

15. Develop a Clear, Realistic and Integral Exit Plan. Specific actions recommended are:
- ➢ *Train (or re-train)* PMCs and all local leaders within the programme zones – emphasising transparency and accountability, encouraging group decision making;
- ➢ *Mobilise and sensitise communities* and local leaders in phase 1 cells. Print communication/ education materials e.g. posters depicting how conflicts can be (have been) resolved through such project activities as the goat shades. Distribute materials (posters, leaflets, flyers,..) to local leaders, schools, churches,…;
- ➢ *Rehabilitate/ restore community projects* that have been destroyed and abandoned to give them a fresh start. In particular, the grain mills in Nyagatare district should be restored to their operational level to give them a fresh start.
- ➢ *Assist beneficiaries to out in place formal institutional arrangements for projects management.* Internal rules/ regulations clarifying roles between PMC members, Conflict Mediators/Trainers, cell leaders and others; and procedures for group decision making including disciplinary actions by *Njyanama*, expenditures or sale of project assets; spell out frequency of meetings and mode of reporting. Committees should have fixed mandates to enable more people to participate and enhance accountability.
- ➢ *Assist communities to publicise and label their projects* for ease of monitoring and to foster ownership. In this respect, signpost bearing the projects' descriptions should be elected at every project site including goats' shades where they exist.
- ➢ *MoUs with district and sector authorities*, with clear rules of operation e.g. all decisions to be on authority of *Njyanama*. Reporting should be to the *Njyanama*, copied to cell leaders and Oxfam, to build ownership and accountability within *Njyanamas*.

What is the Proposed Timeframe?
Timelines will depend on on-going processes; design and budget implications. Recommendations on design cannot be effected now but that implementation nature can.

- ➢ *Areas of immediate action (0-6 months)* include – streamlining M&E, harmonising local reporting formats (so that all cells use similar formats, collect and report on the same data and timelines) and programme staff do the same. Similarly, developing and using checklists for field visits by both field staff Kigali; documentation and follow-up discussions on resolutions and milestones agreed in management meetings are of immediate essence.
- ➢ *Short term (up to 1 year)* for recommendations 2, 3 and 7.
- ➢ *Long-term aspirations but requiring progressive actions (2-3 years)*: Recommendations with policy implications, adjustments in programme strategy and input of external stakeholders will be effected within 2-3 years, and this includes recommendations 10, 12, 13, 15 and 16. But for all recommendations, some action is required in the next two years.

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Annexes

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Annex 3: Tables
Annex 4: Information Flow Diagram
Annex 5: List of People met/ consulted
Annex 6. Oxfam Rwanda Intervention Areas
Annex 7. Some Testimonies and Notes