

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DECEMBER 2018

Strengthening of the Resilience of Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees in Nangarhar, Afghanistan



Project No.: AFG 1185

Duration of the project: 01.07.2016-30.09.2018

Budget: 648,000 €

Names and/or organizations of evaluators: Fast Growth Consultancy

Summary

Brief description of the project and framework conditions

This report compiles the key findings and recommendations of the evaluation of the project entitled „Strengthening of the Resilience of Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees in Nangarhar, Afghanistan. The project was implemented by the Welthungerhilfe (WHH) Afghanistan country office in partnership with the New Consultancy and Relief Organisation (NCRO) for a period of 30 months beginning in July 2016 with a total funding of 1,512,000 euros from the German Federal Foreign Office (AA). The project targeted three districts—Surkhrod, Behsood and Rodat—of Nangarhar Province. The overall objective of the project was to enable communities with a particularly high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees to cover the basic (re)integration needs of the entire population and the humanitarian needs particularly those for WASH and shelter of the vulnerable segment of that population. The project had three components—shelter, WASH and building resilience in DRR— and included building the capacity of communities and institutions and civil protection through the construction of infrastructure.

The evaluation focused on assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and connectedness, coordination, coverage of cross-cutting issues, gender mainstreaming, and impact of the project 1186. It analysed reasons for the success and failure of the planned results and activities, gathered lessons learned, and made recommendations for future programs and projects. The evaluation had three main phases: inception, field work, and reporting, which included the analysis of information. The data collection and analysis tools selected were based on key evaluation criteria identified by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP). The evaluation employed a participatory methodology which included focus group discussions (FGDs), individual interviews, and survey and stakeholder consultations. Prior to beginning the field phase, briefing meetings were held at WHH county and regional offices.

A summary of the key findings of the evaluation, including challenges, lessons learnt, and recommendations, is below.

Relevance

The project was highly relevant for addressing the core problems that vulnerable people, primarily IDPs and returnees, face, and the districts selected—Beshood, Surkhod and Rodat—were appropriate. The project design was appropriate and the program was in line with the priorities and strategic intervention areas of the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GoIRA)—the integration of returnees and IDPs, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene¹. It also kept in mind the GoIRA’S Disaster Management strategy (2014-2017)². The project was designed to incorporate situation analysis and address the actual needs of the communities. It was highly relevant to the WHH’s multi-annual country program (2017-2020) for Afghanistan. There was no overlapping or duplication.

¹ <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/afghanistan-emergency-shelter-and-nfis-strategy-2017>

² GoIRA (2014) Disaster Management Strategy 2014- 2017, Prepared by Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development

Effectiveness

Project 1186 had well-developed annual and quarterly financial plans, including a liquidity plan for implementing activities, and followed them closely. The results showed that the project worked well. Appropriate targeting and the selection of appropriate activities had a positive impact on the community, especially in terms of re-integrating IDPs and returnees and preparing them for disaster. During implementation, the project somewhat followed a self-help approach in that operation-and-maintenance (O&M) and community disaster management committees (CDMCs) were formed. For most activities, including the construction of shelters, latrines, solar pipe scheme, and wells, the project achieved or even exceeded its targets.

The project team developed precise activity plans, monitored on a regular basis, and reported on its activities and submitted them to its donors in a timely manner. The program team participated in regular meetings with the Department of Refugees and Returnees (DoRR), the Directorate of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (DoRRD), the provincial Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), other government agencies, Emergency Shelter Non-Food Items (ESNFI), and FSAC.

Beneficiaries were highly satisfied with all three components—shelter; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); and disaster risk reduction (DRR)—especially with the receipt of kits, construction materials, and cash payments for labor contributions. Government line departments also rated the project as satisfactory and successful based on its smooth implementation, good quality of materials used, and timely handover to beneficiaries. Over the project period, 1895 beneficiaries (920 women and 875 men) were capacitated in DRR, hygiene, and food processing.

The construction of solar pipe schemes to promote WASH was very effective, and beneficiaries reported that all such schemes were functioning very well. The beneficiaries also reported that they were collecting water from protected sources and could access safe drinking water very close to their dwellings.

Evaluator noted that the capacity-building activities conducted under the WASH component were effective. The beneficiaries reported that they did utilize knowledge accrued during training and that they maintained the solar pipe schemes and wells in their communities.

Participants in DRR training had rescued people in their communities during floods and raised awareness about the importance of early warning systems. The overall qualitative rapid assessment rating of the performance of the project in terms of implementation was satisfactory to highly satisfactory.

Efficiency

The cost of the project—approximately 1,512,000 euros— directly benefited approximately 28,221 people, meaning 53.57 euro were spent per person was reasonable. Besides building the capacity of local people, the project provided them with various useful specialized kits. DRR beneficiaries, for example, were provided with first aid and emergency kits, participants in hygiene training were provided with hygiene kits, and participants in O&M were provided with maintenance tools. A calculation of the per-unit cost of training and kits showed that the project was implemented in a cost-efficient manner. The non-monetary benefits of project 1186 included raising awareness about personal hygiene, improving WASH, campaigning for good waste management, and building the capacity to establish and sustain CDMCs.

Adequate resources, including equipment, vehicles, and operating funds were made available throughout the implementation period, and the timely release of funds from the country office also supported the efficient implementation of the project. The project personnel were

committed to implementing the activities and repeatedly stated that they wished to establish good leadership skills at the country and provincial levels. As a result, the WHH was appreciated and recognized by government line departments as a key organisation for the efficient delivery of services.

Outcomes and impacts

It is too early to expect the wide impacts project 1186 could have on the communities targeted, but the evaluators did note some positive outcomes which ought to contribute to the achievement of the overall project objectives. One substantial economic outcome of the project is that because beneficiaries were given a comfortable two-room shelter they did not have to pay rent; instead, they became certified owners of their living space. Among the social-cultural outcomes noticed were that women feel safe living in their permanent shelters. The evaluation found that shelters protected beneficiaries from the sort of harsh weather which constitutes a threat to good health, promoted a sense of wellbeing, and encouraging participation in economic and social activities, all effects which improved living conditions.

Construction of solar pipe scheme showed positive outcomes, especially in reducing work burden for women. In addition, women and girls feel safe while fetching water as water is within 250 meters from their shelter. Awareness on personal hygiene and sanitation increased after the beneficiaries participated in the training, and hygiene and sanitation campaign. The beneficiaries believed that illness due to water born disease has drastically decreased compared to the past as they have been maintaining personal hygiene and sanitation. The evaluation also noted that the open defecation reduced at the community, which will likely to generate the positive impact for the environmental improvements.

Disaster management committees, the hazard maps they prepared, and the skills and knowledge shared during training all helped save both property and lives and to reduce the total number of casualties and property lost during emergencies. Beneficiaries claimed that less property was damaged by floods in 2018 than had been damaged in the past. Beneficiaries also shared that the kits distributed by the project had boosted their confidence in the effectiveness of preparedness measures.

Sustainability and connectedness

The operation and maintenance (O&M) committees in charge of solar pipe schemes collect and deposit a monthly fee from each user household to ensure the sustainability of its efforts. This money is managed by the committee, which uses it to pay the people it hires to carry out maintenance. This measure suggests that this activity is likely to be sustained, as does the establishment of CDMC, capacity-building, and the provision of equipment for emergency response. Trained human resources were linked with the provincial ANDMA for further mobilisation during emergencies and, first aid kits were placed in easily accessible places for use during emergencies.

Coordination

Project 1186 coordinated well with all government line departments to avoid the duplication of activities. The mechanism the WHH regional office used in the eastern region was very effective in strengthening the coordination mechanism with government line departments, district governor offices, DDAs, CDCs, and implementing partners. The NRRD, DoRR and ANDMA appreciated this mechanism. The formation of the Project Appraisal Committee (PAC), which approved all project activities prior to their implementation, was very effective.

Coverage

The geographical coverage and social target of the project was appropriate. During 2015 and 2016, the districts of Beshud, Shurkohod and Rodat had extremely high inflows of returnees and IDPs and, as a result, host communities were over-crowded. The activities implemented by project 1186 were not overlapped or duplicated by other humanitarian agency activities. The social targeting that the project practiced was highly relevant at the time of implementation. The project adopted an inclusion approach to select interventions and focused on the needs of the host communities, especially for DRR as well as the construction of solar pipe schemes and construction and repair of water wells.

Cross-cutting themes

Project 1186 adopted a gender-sensitive approach to maximize women's participation in each result. Good evidence that women were involved in project activities lies in the results achieved. For example, women were trained and provided with first aid and emergency kits; women-headed households and disabled women were considered as vulnerable and included as beneficiaries for shelter construction, and women were encouraged to be members of CDMCs.

Important recommendations

- The project did not specifically design income-generating activities for women. After women get a permanent shelter and small yard, they should get support to participate in vocational training and subsequently engage in income-generating activities.
- The DRR training curriculum should include rescue, drowning, domestic fire hazard management, and taking care of livestock and personal and public properties during emergencies.
- Install early warning systems using mobiles or other devices, if possible, in villages susceptible to flooding. The possibility of working with other organisations which have installed such systems in the project areas should be considered.

General conclusions and lessons learnt

- The project was appropriately conceptualized and its design was based on the ground reality and tailored to the needs of the targeted people. It was well planned and mostly well executed. In general, implementing project activities in partnership with local NGOs having substantial experience was found an appropriate approach followed by the project.
- Social targeting was relevant during implementation as the project adopted an inclusive approach to selecting interventions. The project also focused on the needs of host communities, especially DRR as well as the maintenance of solar pipe schemes and the repair of wells.
- Training community people and collecting fees for operation and maintenance are very good measures for ensuring the sustainability of solar pipe schemes and wells.