

**SOUTH SUDAN REGIONAL CRISIS
REAL TIME EVALUATION, South Sudan
FEBRUARY 3-17 2014
FINAL (EXECUTIVE SUMMARY)**



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Executive Summary

It is clear that the teams, both in country and in the wider Oxfam community, have worked extremely hard and shown dedication and determination during the first phase of the response, despite working in challenging and frustrating conditions. The team should be congratulated. The overall impression of the evaluation is that the speed of the programme has been rapid, bringing immediate assistance to the affected communities that Oxfam could reach. In doing so, the team has solidified an excellent external reputation that can now be built on for the future of the response. However, this should not detract from the fact that the programme strategy has an ambitious scope and the programme will get larger, and more complicated. There are significant gaps in the management structure, and the overall capacity of the team to manage a larger, complex programme in an extremely changeable and insecure environment. Moving forward, key findings and recommendations from the RTE are:

1. Programme, Country and Regional Management raise concerns about the **scale, and future scale**, of the current programme, however this is currently considered appropriate to the level of humanitarian access. Oxfam has plans in place to expand to new areas as soon as the security situation allows more freedom of movement.
2. The response strategy is very ambitious and care has to be taken not to overstretch the capacity of the team. The current management capacity in OGB, as lead affiliate, is **not sufficient to adequately manage the expansion of the current programme**, and the different dimensions of the Oxfam response. The next two months is crucial to ensure an appropriate structure to safely and responsibly manage the programme. High risk.
3. There are multiple key positions currently vacant in the team. It is imperative that the Field Coordinators and Technical Coordinators are highly experienced in their field, have sound management skills, and are used to working in insecure environments. The ability of Oxfam to **recruit highly competent staff** to fit the programme ambitions is one of the highest priority areas, and one of the highest risks for the organisation.
4. The EP&R strategy is well known by the team, and widely accepted. However, the strategy was written for a different context and must be re-visited to ensure its appropriateness. There are a number of risks associated with the 3 month limitation on the EP&R team programmes, which could **compromise Oxfam's programme quality standards**.
5. **Exit from current programme areas has not been sufficiently planned**, and needs to be done responsibly and with a clear timeframe. This should include clear standards and indicators for handover, such as capacity of partners, quality and stage of the Oxfam technical response, and critical milestones of the programme.
6. Oxfam currently has a **good external reputation** for speed of movement and quality of water provision in the first phase of the response, although concerns were raised with regard to safe programming and gender. It is important that programme quality (working towards SPHERE standards, responsible coordination and exit) is not compromised due to the desire to constantly respond rapidly. In sites visited by the RTE team, the technical standard of the WASH hardware, and the EFSVL programme, were at a suitable and expected level for this stage of the response. However, there is significant room for improvement to bring the WASH programme up to Oxfam and international standards, which can only be done with more time and proper planning.
7. The Country Team acknowledges the **lack of planning and communication**. Senior managers in country react quickly to a changing environment, but decisions are not adequately communicated to the rest of the team, which has caused confusion. The rainy season is a cause of high concern for staff, compounded by the lack of certainty about the current volatile situation in the country. As a result of

discussions with the team, a planning workshop will take place in the first week of March, which is an extremely positive move.

8. While valuable progress is being made by separate sectors, there is confusion and a plethora of lost opportunities due to the **segregation** of WASH and EFSVL. Protection and Gender are currently weakly represented in the programme, and Oxfam has a larger role to play in **advocating for beneficiaries' rights** in areas where the organisation has not been allocated a lead role by the cluster system (space, shelter, NFIs, relocation, protection)
9. A new advocacy strategy and a media and communications strategy were drafted for the response – the objectives in these strategies are widely perceived to be useful. There is however a perceived disconnect between Oxfam's advocacy messages outside the country and those being used in South Sudan. This disconnect is now becoming evident to external stakeholders, potentially jeopardising **impact of the messages**, and there is an urgent need for agreement on a unified direction.
10. Commendable progress has been made on the Security Management plan, information gathering and analysis. However staff involvement in the creation of the security guidelines and SOPs has been minimal, and the security procedures and protocols are not embedded in the ways of working of the team. **Day to day security management is not sufficient for the context**. The sharing of security information to the wider team still requires a significant amount of work.