Final Report

MID-TERM REVIEW OF OXFAM NOVIB'S PROGRAMME "SOWING DIVERSITY = HARVESTING SECURITY"

leitmotiv
consultoría social

Photo: *Sacha de Boer - sdhsprogram.org/mid-term-review-2021/*

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Executive Summary

This report shares the findings of the Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security (SD=HS) programme launched by Oxfam Novib in 2014 within the framework of the Seeds GROW programme with the financial support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

The main purpose of the MTR was to determine the extent to which SD=HS activities are contributing towards the programme's overall objectives and outcomes, to identify the lessons that can be drawn to date, and to help stakeholders acquire the necessary information to take timely and informed decisions about the future of the SD=HS programme. The MTR has actively engaged key stakeholders through an analytical process of collective examination and assessment (including a literature review, key informant interviews, focus groups discussions, collection of stories through Sprockler and ParEvo, a preliminary findings workshop, and discussions with key stakeholders on the draft MTR report). The evaluation team has encouraged the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, with a view to ensuring ownership, reflection, and immediate learning outside of (and complementary to) the recommendations included in this MTR report and their implementation.

The findings of the MTR suggest that despite the challenges posed by the current COVID-19 pandemic, the SD=HS programme has achieved positive results to date and is clearly responding to the needs and rights of indigenous peoples, smallholder farmers, women and youth. SD=HS is also contributing to global efforts to rebalance power relations by bringing the interests of smallholder farmers to the international arena and will continue to remain relevant if it uses its demonstrative value to secure buy-in from organisations that can institutionalise the programme's approach and scale it up. Even if SD=HS is clearly relevant to all stakeholders, its alignment with Oxfam Novib and the Oxfam family is uncertain in a context marked by Oxfam's restructuring process.

In terms of coherence, the SD=HS programme has a strong and well-articulated logic that is widely shared by all stakeholders, even if various assumptions are still to be proved or challenged, partly due to the timeframe of the programme. The MTR has also noted that certain implementation efforts have been diverted towards expanding scope and focus, given the programme's commitment to the communities and their long-standing relation with partners.

One of the key strengths of the SD=HS programme noted is the wealth of synergies built between the SD=HS programme and other initiatives, including excellent collaboration and networking with key sector actors. SD=HS continues to occupy a unique position in the sector and there are no duplications of its role.

In terms of efficiency, SD=HS staff and partners have succeeded in efficiently coordinating and managing resources with positive results despite COVID-19-related challenges, coupled with factors such as extreme weather events and elections in several countries. As a result of these efforts, the SD=HS programme has achieved a remarkable overall delivery rate of 89%. However, the distribution of financial resources raises questions about where decisions are made, levels of participation and accountability. Overall, coordination between implementing partners and the Oxfam Novib Global Team has been effective and fluid throughout implementation.

In terms of effectiveness, the SD=HS programme has achieved many positive results under all four pillars and across the eight countries of implementation, even if existing discrepancies in the available data make the level of achievement difficult

to ascertain. The capabilities of implementing partners and the length of their engagement in the SD=HS themes constitute key success factors.

The SD=HS programme demands high levels of participation from stakeholders and its narrative promotes transformative changes through empowerment. In practice, this translates into a highly participatory approach in FFSs that is transformative in nature. In terms of the management and governance of the programme, the type of participation that emerges seems to be more of a representative or instrumental nature. There have also been great efforts by the SD=HS programme to facilitate women's participation at all levels with positive results across activities, and the participation of indigenous peoples constitutes another positive aspect. In the case of youth, promising results have emerged but ensuring their participation remains a challenge.

In terms of contributions to changes, many positive results have been noted, which is remarkable, considering that most of the programme has been carried out under adverse global conditions due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Most of these contributions were related to learning and the acquisition of new skills and were of a collective nature, with the community dimension playing a central role.

In terms of sustainability, ensuring that results achieved to date continue to flow beyond the life of the programme constitutes a long-term process that depends on the commitment and the capacity of the different stakeholders to maintain their engagement over time. There have been important efforts to institutionalise FFS, with positive advances to date, while the results that are more likely to continue are those related to capacity-building. Although the overall prospects for FSEs are improving, ensuring their sustainability will require more time. Results that have influenced policy practices are likely to be sustainable, even if political changes at both the national and international levels can have unexpected effects.

Finally, learning constitutes a key result area of the programme that is relevant to all stakeholders, since the type of action-research that is promoted allows for multi-stakeholder engagement at different levels. Furthermore, SD=HS is uniquely placed to play a knowledge brokering role in the sector. The programme's Participatory Knowledge Management and Learning Strategy constitutes a positive step in this direction, especially if it maximises opportunities to share the wealth of knowledge generated by the programme and strengthens this dimension through its "linking and learning partner" in the future.

A series of recommendations are provided in this report: 1) to strengthen coordination and integration among pillars; 2) to strengthen the programme's policy practice influencing component; 3) to join the "glocal" dots; 4) to maximise the programme's demonstrative value; 5)to strengthen inclusiveness; 6) to embrace the concept that "time is money"; 7) to rebalance power relations; 8) to strengthen transparency; 9) to fine-tune the generation of information; 10) to enhance participatory knowledge management and learning efforts; 11) to reflect on future scenarios; 12) to promote seed multiplication; 13) to explore climate insurance; 14)to collect more evidence on the impact of NUS on nutrition.

Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security (SD=HS)

Introduction

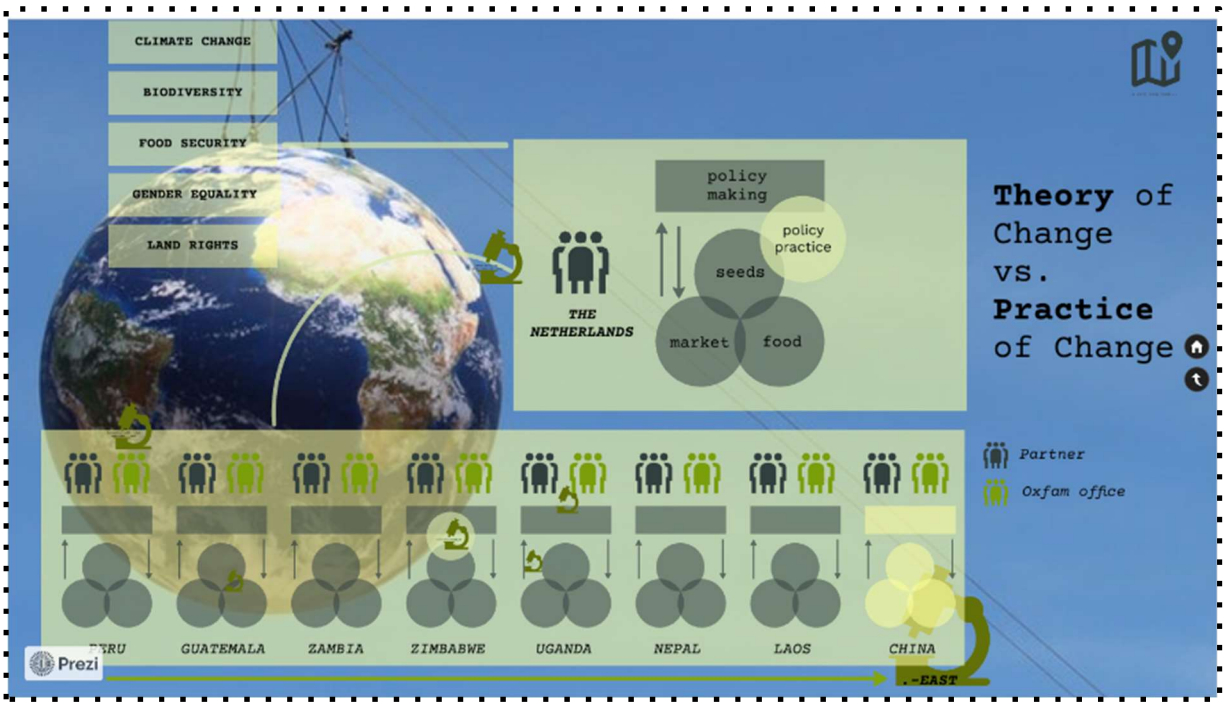
The Sowing Diversity = Harvesting Security (SD=HS) programme was launched by Oxfam Novib in 2014 within the framework of the Seeds GROW programme with the financial support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). SD=HS applies a three-fold implementation approach that seeks to: a) strengthen the rights of indigenous and smallholder farmers; b) build their technical capacity; and c) influence policymaking in areas related to both access and use of plant genetic resources for food and nutrition security.

Currently in its second phase, the SD=HS programme pursues the overall objectives of the first phase but has extended/strengthened its focus on mainstreaming the SD=HS approach into the policies and practices of other organizations and partners; on strengthening knowledge management and innovation; and on up-scaling the initiative on the basis of the results of the first phase and the lessons learned in the process.

An approach to the ToC of SD=HS

During the Mid-Term Review (MTR), the evaluation team developed the following illustration (see figure 1) to explain the most salient aspects of the programme's Theory of Change, based on the views shared by consulted stakeholders and the documents reviewed. The ToC was validated with the programme management team during the preliminary findings' session.

Figure 1 - Theory of Change (Source: MTR team)

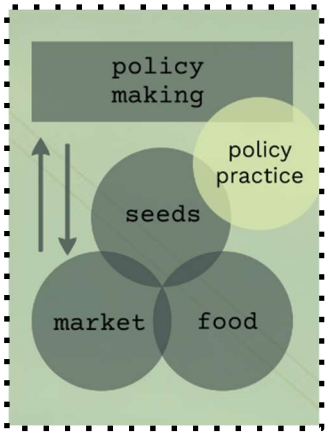


Explicitly and implicitly, the SD=HS programme is based on a ToC with four formal outcomes, known in the programme as pillars. Outcome 1: Farmers' crop diversity management (seeds), is the backbone of the initiative, which was the first component and hosts the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) approach. FFSs are spaces where farmers learn how to restore, improve and adapt seed varieties that are relevant to their livelihood. This process is known as Participatory Plant Breeding (PPB). The underpinning assumption is that through this learning, small holder farmers (SHF)

will be better able to access, sustainably use and maintain plant genetic resources for food and nutrition security, climate change adaptation and disaster management.

"Zooming in" into the ToC, the logic of outcomes 2 and 3 flows from outcome 1 (see figure 2). Outcome 2: Farmer Seed Enterprises (market) makes provisions so that seeds that are restored or improved in FFSs can have a commercial outlet. The statement for this outcome is that "indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers (IPSHF) enhance their livelihoods, income and seed security through improved production or market access to high-quality seeds of diverse crops and varieties, which are adapted to farmers' needs and preferences".

Figure 2: Logic among pillars



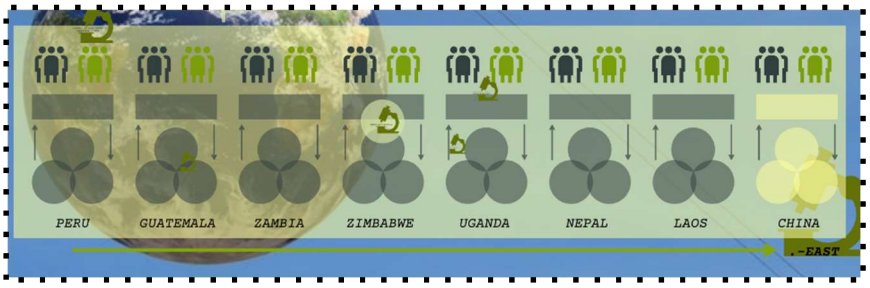
Outcome 3: Nutrition and local food plants (food) focuses on local food plants to improve dietary diversity and quality, and to reduce the length and number of households that suffer from the food scarcity period. More broadly, this outcome aims at strengthening "coping strategies of communities by increasing the intake of nutritious food based on local biodiversity and improved management of local food plants (particularly Neglected and Underutilised Species (NUS)".

Outcome 4: An enabling policy environment (policymaking) seeks to influence policy at both the global and national level, which has been the focus during this second phase. In the ToC, outcome 4 relates to the first three in two ways. It aims at providing evidence (including elements from the other three pillars) so that policy makers can develop informed legislation on farmers' rights. Secondly, it aims at ensuring that global (and especially national) policies support practices under the other SD=HS pillars (e.g., current legislation should allow and encourage farmers to sell the seed varieties they restore). This is well expressed in the outcome statement "Policymakers and other stakeholders support an enabling policy and institutional environment for farmers' seed systems and the implementation of Farmers' Rights".

Additionally, this Mid-Term Review has identified a distinct component (policy practice), which is an additional area of work that aims at influencing policy practice normally carried out from outcome 1. That is, it does not try to influence the development of public policy, but rather the way in which policies that are already in place are implemented by the competent authorities. The most prominent example would be efforts to influence relevant ministries and departments to adopt similar approaches to FFS. This component would also include the role played by the programme in bridging the gap between researchers and extension workers, who are government employees, and the farmers themselves, i.e., that duty bearers, extension workers and researchers engage in breeding and that they do so jointly with farmers and not in isolation (see 6.1).

This general ToC has been replicated in eight countries (see figure 3) with very different contexts (China, Guatemala, Laos, Nepal, Peru, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

Figure 3: ToC in different countries



The contexts of these countries obviously differ from an economic, political, cultural and social perspective; but they also differ with regards to how each country is involved in the programme.

The geographical scope of the programme per outcome has evolved over time, with

activities expanding to cover an increasing number of countries. In the case of outcome 1, the number of countries covered increased from an initial 5 to 8 countries since the beginning of 2019. Under outcome 2, the programme started with a pilot in Zimbabwe to later cover 4 more countries. In 2020, a total of 9 Farmer Seed Enterprises (FSE) were strengthened in China (1), Guatemala (4), Nepal (3) and Zimbabwe (1). Under outcome 3, the programme covers 7 of the 8 countries (with the exception of China as "linking and learning partner" of the programme), while all 8 countries are involved in activities under outcome 4.

The logic behind this geographical scope is to develop demonstrative cases (not pilots, given the significant number of FFS) from different environments that can provide evidence to national and global advocacy work around wider issues such as food security, biodiversity, climate change, inequality, land rights, etc.

There are a number of assumptions underlying different levels of this ToC which will be discussed in different parts of this report, most prominently in 1.3. and 2.1.[1]

[1] These two evaluation questions have been merged to avoid duplication of content.

Evaluation methodology

Purpose of the evaluation

The main purpose of the MTR, as defined in the ToRs, was to determine the extent to which the different activities have contributed towards the overall objectives and outcomes, to identify the lessons that can be drawn to date, and to help stakeholders acquire the necessary information to take timely and informed decisions about the future of the SD=HS programme.

General framework

In line with Leitmotiv's approach to evaluation and social research, this Mid-Term Review has been both utilization-focused and people-centred. Hence, it has actively engaged key stakeholders through an analytical process based on a process of collective examination and assessment. By encouraging the participation of a wide range of stakeholders, the evaluators have ensured ownership, reflection and immediate learning outside of (and complementary to) the recommendations included in this final report and their implementation[2].

MTR questions

On the basis of the documents reviewed and a brief needs-assessment conducted with members of the SD=HS team, the evaluation team developed a detailed MTR matrix that contains the final questions of the enquiry. In answering the MTR questions, the evaluation team drew from the best available evidence across a range of sources using a mixed-methods approach (see Annex 1). This final report presents the main findings and answers to key MTR questions on the basis of evidence gathered during the assignment.

Data generation methods

The current COVID-19 pandemic limited the possibilities of visiting the eight countries of implementation and required the application of alternative and/or complementary data collection methods.

Desk review

The evaluation team reviewed over 200 documents (see Annex 2), including strategy documents, project monitoring reports, various publications, previous evaluations and a number of third-party documents and reports, and official documents. Given the level of documentation analysed, the team opted to use a specialised Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software that added an extra layer of rigour to the research process.

Key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus groups discussion (FGDs)

The evaluation team conducted virtual semi-structured interviews (or small focus group discussions) based on the stakeholder inventory[3] (see Annex 3). Efforts were

[2] Additionally, the MTR has adhered to the following principles:
Forward-looking - Examining what has worked and not worked in the past, not just to capture history, but to inform the future.
Rigorous - Following an evidence-based approach and using a variety of data collection methods and sources to ensure all findings are triangulated.
Flexible - Combining different approaches and tools adapted to the needs, opportunities, and contexts that the process has required, including adjusting to constraints and limitations related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Women's voices at the heart - Putting women's voices and experiences at the centre of the evaluation approach and favouring tools that privilege their perspectives.

[3] The evaluation team developed a stakeholder inventory with the support of the SD=HS team to identify and classify the programme's partners and key stakeholders, as well as staff members involved in implementation. Special efforts were made to apply a gender equality lens to the stakeholder analysis. The inventory served two purposes: it provided a snapshot of

made to ensure that a range of voices was represented and that all the categories included in the stakeholder inventory were covered. For each of the potential KIIs or FGDs, questions were drawn up to address the core MTR questions and intersect with the informants' background.

Sprockler

The evaluation used Sprockler[4] as its default method to reach primary stakeholders, in all countries but China. The evaluation team, assisted by the SD=HS team in each country, collected and analysed 342 stories (% women). The Sprockler report can be accessed here (https://visualizer.sprockler.com/en/open/seeds)

In all informants' responses, and particularly in these Sprockler's stories, there could be a degree of desirability bias that may have affected the tone of the responses.

ParEvo

To offer a more holistic perspective and deepen the analysis with the experts, the evaluation team used ParEvo[5]. 15 participants purposely chosen were asked to collaboratively develop possible scenarios for the rest of the project implementation and beyond, taking into account important contextual factors, such as the restructuring of Oxfam, the interaction of the project with other relevant themes (such as climate change), the broader dialogue taking place in the sector on its necessary decolonisation, the COVID-19 situation, etc. A wider group was invited as observers and commentators of the process.

Once the storylines were complete, an online survey was sent to people who participated in the MTR to validate the stories and provide additional insights, 26% of those requested provided feedback (75% from the 8 countries and 25% from the Hague; 37% were women).

All ParEvo stories can be consulted here: (https://parevo.org/exercise/imagining-possible-futures-in-sdhs-and-beyond)

Debriefing meeting

Sharing conclusions was a critical part of the analytical process. To this end, the team organized a workshop on the 6th of September 2021 to discuss the preliminary findings of the MTR with members of the SD=HS team.

Writing the report

The SD=HS Oxfam Novib management team provided a first round of valuable comments on the first MTR draft report. Once these initial adjustments were made, the programme team began a wider round of discussions consisting of two working sessions attended by 33 persons. They included representatives of partner organizations in Africa, Asia and Latin America, representatives of different Oxfam offices, as well as members of the team in The Hague. The inputs from these meetings were systematised and incorporated in this final version of the report.

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the range of SD=HS partners, and it was used to select potential informants for the different data generation spaces.

[4] Sprockler is a methodology and an online platform that allows for collecting, processing, analysing and visualising data. It is specially designed to evaluate complex contexts. It enables users to collect and combine quantitative and qualitative data and present this information in an accessible manner.

[5] Method of developing past histories or future scenarios using a participatory evolutionary process. Developed by Rick Davies: https://parevo.org/

Findings

READING AIDS

🧐 - This symbol is followed by technical reflections from the thematic expert of the evaluation team that complement elements of the analysis shared.

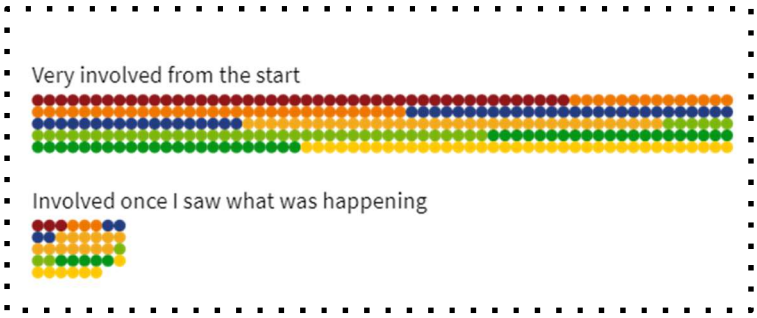
"..." - Quotes are used to illustrate triangulated findings that have emerged during the MTR as opposed to opinions of concrete individuals.

RELEVANCE - Is SD=HS doing the right things? The extent to which the program's objectives and design respond to the needs of the targeted women and men in the eight countries and other key stakeholders.

1.1. Have the needs and strategic interests of the specific target groups been prioritized in the program design, implementation and choice of approaches?

The programme clearly responds to the needs of the SHFs targeted by the programme, since improving the seeds they cultivate and acquiring related skills, constitute prime concerns for them.

Figure 4: Your involvement in SD=HS. (Source: Sprockler)



A critical factor that has ensured the relevance of the approach, particularly under pillars 1 and 3 has been the high level of participation of farmers in the FFSs from the diagnostic stages, as illustrated in their answers to the Sprockler question" My involvement with this project can be described as" (see Figure 4).

The principle that FFSs activities respond to SHF needs is at the heart of the programme's methodology. In the FFSs (which are the backbone of SD=HS), there is a diagnostic stage that involves a discussion on the kinds of crops and traits, and/or the nutritional aspects to work on. Different interests across groups are then examined and discussed to identify needs and come up with a decision-making process. This approach has required very sharp methodologies and tools that help farmers analyse their situation. The nature of the participatory approach of the FFSs and the constant adaptation of tools (field guides, etc.) have also meant that relevance was maintained throughout implementation despite changes in the context.

While the nature and focus of the programme are relevant to the needs of farmers, the scope of the programme is limited. On the one hand, this implies that not all farmers' needs can be (or are intended to be) covered by the programme. Hence, the programme works with SHFs through FFSs to focus on specific research objectives that farmers can act upon.

On the other hand, it means that the programme does not have the capacity to reach all the farmers who could potentially benefit. However, although the critical mass that SD=HS reaches is not enough to change the way breeding is done in a country, it is large enough for the programme to have significant demonstrative value in different contexts. In other words, to demonstrate that "other breeding is possible" and that the approach can be scaled up.

The fact that this programme builds on extensive sector experience and a long-standing relationship with SHF has further strengthened its relevance. However, it

has also meant that the accountability that Oxfam and partners feel to their constituencies, due precisely to the long-standing work with them, has made it difficult to ring-fence the programme. Rather, there has been a natural tendency to embrace complementary strategies responding to new identified needs of the communities, for example the need to market seeds in pillar 2, or the need to nurture other sources of foods like NUS in pillar 3. This thematic expansion that has occurred during phase 1 and 2 of SD=HS, has enriched the programme in the cases where pillars firmly complement each other. In cases where this complementarity is not so clear and the pillars are less coordinated, this has weakened the programme's overall relevance. This is an aspect that has emerged frequently in KII and FGDs with stakeholders including partners, external experts and Oxfam staff (see also 2.1).

The relevance of Pillar 4 for both national governments and SHFs is very high. There is a wide consensus that the assumption underpinning Pillar 4 is correct: i.e., that national governments require support and encouragement to operationalise farmers' rights and combine them with their international commitments. Governments also agree that it is desirable and possible to protect local varieties and register them for some kind of sale that provides benefits to farmers. However, it has been widely acknowledged during the MTR that this is technically difficult in most countries and not a priority in the prevailing commercial sector. Hence, the approach of the programme in this regard is appropriate.

1.2. Has the programme's work responded to the need to consider social inclusion and gender equality integration?

The inclusion of youth, particularly young men, remains a challenge for the programme that was already identified in the evaluation of phase 1 of SD=HS.

As figure 5 illustrates, when SHFs were asked who they thought the project benefitted the most, women mostly replied it was them; men mostly replied it was them, but young people did not have that clarity and thought that the project benefited equally older or younger people.

Figure 5: SD=HS benefits more... (source: Sprockler)

Oxfam Novib and its partners are aware of this, as was evident in the consultation sessions on the draft report of this MTR, where it was stated that the programme "didn't formulate a central strategy" to target young people.

A theme that came up repeatedly during the MTR in relation to this was the need for income generation, especially in relation to young men who would otherwise migrate from the community.

> "(young people) *are not interested in agricultural production. They want other opportunities*" (Participant, workshop discussing the MTR draft)

In order to address this concern, SD=HS has reoriented Pillar 2 activities towards community based FSEs in some countries. However, these efforts are still in their early stages, as they started in 2021.

It should be noted though that youth participation differs from country to country and can also vary according to the moment and to the fast-changing environments.

For example, disruptive circumstances such as the COVID 19 pandemic led to young people in some countries taking on a new role in supporting older participants in activities that had to be adapted to the online environment.

The focus on gender equality and women's empowerment is explicit throughout the programme. It is present in the project proposal, in monitoring tools such as CAMSA, and in dedicated sections of the annual reports. The availability of sex-disaggregated data is consistent.

The approach to gender equality has frequently gone beyond the number of women participating. This is particularly the case under Pillar 1, where there are many examples of gender-sensitive criteria included in foundational documents of FFS and measures intended to increase women's participation in the FFS have been designed and implemented throughout the programme (as discussed under Effectiveness). This is also true under Pillar 3, which has emerged as particularly well-aligned with women's tactical needs (even if not necessarily challenging women's traditional gender roles).

The inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment in the design phase of the project was weaker in Pillars 2 and 4. For example, several countries identified that a major barrier for women to participate in Pillar 2 activities was that they did not have land tenure, which is a basic precondition for producing and marketing seeds. However, no specific measures were designed to address this problem.

Under Pillar 4, the absence of a gender analysis to determine how the policies being advocated for affect women and men differently has been identified as a missed opportunity. There is also no analysis of how SD=HS contributes or could contribute to the broader goal of gender equality, to the same extent that thematic analyses have been developed for other wider issues such as climate change.

Although indigenous peoples have been identified as an excluded social group, particularly in Guatemala and Peru, there is no concrete tailored approach that sets out how the SD=HS programme is addressing their needs in a differentiated manner (for example, there is no disaggregated data). Nonetheless, positive results were captured that relate specifically to this population group.

1.4. Extent to which the programme is aligned with present (and foreseeable future) strategic priorities of key stakeholders.

The MTR finds that the alignment of the SD=HS programme with the strategic priorities of different stakeholders is very good. Most relevantly, all partners selected to be implementers have been committed to the aims of the programme for a long time. They were also selected on the basis of reputational and professional contacts in the sector, which has been very positively rated by all informants.

Partners therefore have a proven commitment and extensive experience of relevance to the programme's aims. They have all been working towards the similar objectives to SD=HS for a long time, sometimes using similar approaches like FFS which were previously used by the new partner in Peru, for example, or in Zimbabwe, in this case also with a long-standing partnership with Oxfam.

Additionally, SD=HS invested significant efforts to ensure that the programme approach was closely aligned to the priorities and expertise of the partners. Most significantly, partners were asked to validate the programme outline in 2018 during the design of the program and during the first Global Crop Workshop. On the basis of these exchanges, they were asked to share experiences which they considered to be most relevant to the programme´s components and subsequently they developed concrete proposals. This consultation process lasted around eight months. Furthermore, diagnostic systems were devised in different components (for example, feasibility studies for Pillar 2) that allowed activities in each country to be adapted according to the context of each partner once the partners´ proposals were approved.

These efforts contributed to increasing the relevance of the programme for the partners. However, it is also worth noting that the general outline of the programme (i.e., the definition of the components/pillars and the main approaches/methodologies) was defined by Oxfam before involving most partners of this phase[6]. This has meant that, although with considerable consultation and flexibility, partners have ultimately had to adapt the approaches they were already using to fit the pillars and methods previously defined by SD=HS.

From a participation point of view, this type of process could be described as a form of representative participation where partners were able to shape some aspects of SD=HS (see Figure 18 in section 4.3.).

SD=HS is strongly aligned with the mandates of a range of key national stakeholders including Ministries, national research centres, and gene banks, in the different countries. In Lao PDR, the main partner of the programme is the National Agricultural Forestry and Rural Research Institute (NAFRI)and Department of Agriculture (DOA) which are a department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. This has ensured full alignment with national government strategies.

The programme has an essential component aimed at influencing public policy, especially regarding farmers' rights. Naturally, these are policies that are not (yet) aligned with what the project is aiming at.

As concerns Oxfam Novib, the MTR finds that the organisation has a very long-standing tradition of working on the issues the programme deals with, which proves that SD=HS is relevant to the organisation's strategies. Moreover, many stakeholders outside the SD=HS programme have underlined its good reputation, since it is considered successful inside and outside Oxfam. This also increases its relevance for the organisation.

In a context marked by Oxfam's restructuring, the MTR has also identified tension between the global policy impact and the local achievements and logic, that could affect the programme's relevance for the organisation.

> "*The urge to go bigger and achieve global impact carries the risk of becoming footloose*" (Gordon, ParEvo).

On the one hand, Oxfam's raison d'être has become unequivocally of a glocal activist nature. In this landscape, programmes like SD=HS are in the words of an Oxfam staff member "a bit of a strange duck in the pond" as it is an initiative rooted in communities; delivering training and defining curricula, which (as one consulted stakeholder noted) might be seen as "slightly old fashioned" by the redefined strategic direction of the organisation.

On the other hand, the relevance of having these "*boots on the ground*" has been widely recognised by external and internal stakeholders, since the programme provides the evidence and legitimacy needed to advocate in both national and global venues.

The integration of SD=HS into the different Oxfam national offices is very diverse and linked to different units/clusters, especially since Oxfam restructuring in 2020. Being a very versatile programme, SD=HS adequately serves the strategic interests of different country offices.

For example, in Nepal, SD=HS is located under *Resilience and Climate Justice*, a broad portfolio of projects related to economic justice, climate change and disaster management. In Guatemala, it is also under Climate Justice but with a heavy focus on the rights of indigenous peoples. In Laos, the project is under strategic "Domain 4" Sustainable Development and Responsible Investment.

[6] The outline has been developed based on a prior experience through partnerships in previous phases.

In any case, it is not easy to understand how high a priority each country office gives to the programme in the strategies. The available documents outline broad lines of work and the extent to which offices have the will and human resources is unclear. This is important in light of Oxfam's restructuring process, particularly in the so-called "70/30" (see section 3.2.).

The project is fully aligned with SIDA´s strategic priorities through three themes; biodiversity, climate change and gender, while also serving the interest of the donor to support a programme with a global dimension on this theme.

Global actors and international context

All experts consulted agree that SD=HS is in perfect alignment with all relevant existing treaties and international frameworks. Both the programme and Oxfam at large are seen as actors and key advocates of the FFS approach. Even organisations with very different approaches[7] to Oxfam recognise the relevance of the organisation and/or the staff of SD=HS as a hub with the capacity to bring together key stakeholders to the table.

COHERENCE - How well does the program fit? The extent to which other interventions (inside and outside Oxfam) support or undermine the program, and vice versa.

1.3. Are the program activities/outputs adequately linked up and do they provide the best approach to achieve the program's outcomes?

2.1. SD=HS coherence - what are the existing synergies and connections between the four components of the programme?[8]

The MTR finds that both the ToC that is explicitly distilled from the project document and the implicit nuances or assumptions on which it is based are widely shared (see Figure 1). This means that the logic that holds the four components or pillars together is impeccable and understood by all. Consulted stakeholders described components and connections in similar terms, which suggests that there is a well-established common narrative.

Another aspect shared within this common narrative is the weight given to Pillar 1, which is unanimously regarded as the backbone of the programme and is consistent with its resource allocation (see section 3.1.).

Pillar 4 has also emerged as a centrepiece of the intervention logic, being the hub that connects the local and the global. However, investment in this component is significantly lower than in the rest of the components (see section 3.1.).

As mentioned under the description of the ToC (see figure 1), the MTR finds that there are some assumptions embedded in the logic of the programme that are not being properly challenged. At the same time, there is wide consensus that the conceptualisation around the four pillars has produced four highly specialised and distinct lines of work, already defined as separate workstreams in Phase 1, and that this compartmentalisation has made connections between pillars more difficult. This idea was endorsed in the review sessions of the draft of this MTR report.

The interdependence and synergies among pillars vary from country to country, but it also varies from pillar to pillar. For example, according to several Oxfam respondents and their counterparts, Pillar 1 implementation teams, both at headquarters and in-country, find it more difficult in practice to interact substantively with teams from other pillars. The reason is that the Pillar 1 methodology was designed as a stand-alone process. Its implementation is extraordinarily complex and creating synergies with the other pillars adds a level

[7] For example, UPOV and CGIAR.

[8] These two questions have been merged to avoid duplications.

of complexity for which insufficient resources (financial, human, technical, time, etc.) have been provided until now.

> "(Pillar 1 teams) *are going and achieving the results in the log frame that they're supposed to achieve. And there's no time built into it. They're giving their own time at that point. It's not that there is no desire. It is that they´re already working so hard*". (SD=HS Staff member)

However, sources from The Hague have indicated that interaction with other pillars is expected to become more natural as facilitators are trained in multiple pillars. This will take time since this process has only begun in 2021. The idea that the integration of components takes time also emerged in the consultation sessions that were organised to discuss the draft of this report:

> "*Only after 2.5 years can we see that the work of P1 effectively leads to P2*" (Participant, Discussions of MTR draft report)

The accountability that partners feel towards communities (and towards Oxfam) is also an important factor impeding these synergies. It has clearly emerged that from Pillar 1, there is more pressure (from both Oxfam and the community) to spend available resources on expanding the coverage and quality of FFSs, rather than on facilitating spaces for reflection and exchanges between pillars.

The connection that is made between Pillars 1 and 2 according to the ToC has not occurred in practice yet. The implicit ToC suggests that Pillar 1 will do Participatory Variety Enhancement (PVE), Participatory Variety Selection (PVS) and Participatory Variety Development (PVD)[9]; and then Pillar 2 will commercialise these enhanced or developed varieties. In reality, Pillar 2 is commercialising varieties of other origins outside the programme because in the target countries only registered varieties can be commercialised.

Several reasons have emerged as to why this intended connection is not happening. Firstly, PVE and PVD **take a long time** (see chapter 6 on Sustainability) and as detailed in the chapter on Contributions to Change (5), only a few varieties from FFS have made it through all the filters to be legally marketed. However, even when some FFS varieties can already be commercialised (as in the case of Zimbabwe) current regulations require companies to bid for the right to commercialise them and there is no guarantee that Champion Seeds (the FSE under Pillar 2), will get permission to trade them.

Secondly, the fact that the process of developing and/or enhancing seeds takes a long time and requires considerable resources (human, financial, expertise, etc.) means that it is difficult to amortise the investment purely through selling PVD and PVE seeds. In countries where Pillar 2 is active, the majority had to market seeds from established lines due to the regulatory environment. In some countries, such as Zimbabwe and Nepal, there is a (rather implicit[10]) view that this activity will be able to subsidise the sale of PVD and PVE (which are loss-making in nature) in the future.

The problem that has emerged with this approach is that a viable and solid company is needed that can absorb the risk of commercialising PVD and PVE. This solidity is difficult to guarantee if the company is created from scratch by the programme, as

[9] PVE - i.e., will restore "popular local varieties that may have lost some of its preferred traits or are no longer well adapted to changing climate conditions"; in PVS "stable lines (like formally released varieties, stable breeder lines, farmers' varieties are compared"; (Berg et al, 2019). In PVD, "Selection is carried out in target environments and farmers select breeding lines that are more suited to their needs and well adapted to their conditions" (Al-Khayri et al, 2016).

[10] This approach is not explicitly stated in strategic documents, but it is happening.

was the case of Champion Seeds in Zimbabwe[11]. According to Oxfam and partner sources, in Nepal and Guatemala the programme opted to work with established cooperatives that could theoretically[12] assume this risk, although they are not yet doing so.

In general, Pillar 3's relations with the other programme components have emerged as the most fluid. The connections with Pillar 1 are the strongest. Often, both Pillars work with the same SHFs and with the same seed banks. The synergies with the policy component have also emerged strongly:

> "*In nutrition, we definitely have a strategy about needing to understand what policies and laws exist globally. We are doing a systematic literature review right now looking at global experience at the national level linking nutrition policy to smallholder farmers*". (SD=HS staff)

The links are weaker between Pillars 2 and 3. For example, in Uganda, there was an excess production from home food gardens that might have been sold following the logic of outcome 2. However, such mechanisms, i.e., how to benefit from the potential surplus of home gardens, have not been envisaged in the programme.

Beyond the relations of Pillar 3 with the rest of the programme, experts have noted that there is one element in the logic of this pillar that has not received sufficient attention. This is the lack of specific recognition that NUS have not only beneficial effects, but also pernicious effects through the presence of anti-nutritional factors.

As stated in the chapter that describes the implicit ToC, the PPB work was designed from the outset to influence policy and practice change and support farmers' seed systems. In practice, the logic that the first three pillars aimed at influencing public policy hides several assumptions worth reflecting upon.

> "*I think a weakness of the programme is not having pillar to pillar integration and connection. Any policy strategy needs to be part and parcel of work, and I think that is certainly not a strength of the programme*" (SD=HS staff).

Most relevantly, the MTR finds that there are conflicting views about those who believe that the work in Pillars 1, 2 and 3 are informing Pillar 4[13] and those who

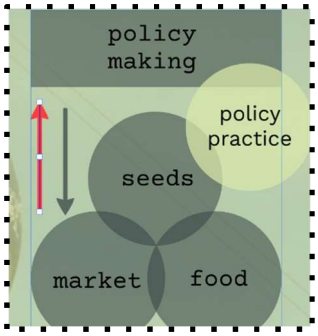
[11] Our expert´s reflection: Even solid companies, if they are small, cannot afford to pay for their R&D, which is the development of new varieties. For example, Champion Seeds has established 100 plots for this purpose. It is unlikely that in the medium term, small companies will be able to afford to incorporate this cost in their balance sheet, due to the high logistical cost of running the experiments and the low profit margins in a competitive seed market. These activities will be subsidized either by governments or by international cooperation. What is crucial is to distinguish in the accounts which parts are subsidized.

[12] In Nepal, one of the three cooperatives the project partnered with had to be dropped because of issues related to their weak governance structure.

[13] These views came largely from inside Oxfam, illustrated by examples such as participants from FFSs who have been raising their voices in National or International policy spaces. The legitimate question that emerged around this was whether this type of engagement means that these people´s policy pleas have been raised or if these people's voices are legitimising Oxfam´s policy position determined previously without their involvement.

think that there are no clear pathways for the policy pleas emerging from the pillars to reach SD=HS policy influencing work[14] (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: From pillars to policy



The most frequent reason given to explain why this pathway was not fully practicable is that policy work (in general) has a nature that is more opportunistic than other pillars and thus requires different planning; i.e. not necessarily (or not only) planning in advance what policy to influence (which has been done very deliberately in SD=HS[15]), but to listen to the problems that arise in the work of the different pillars in order to incorporate them into the advocacy process more organically.

This implicit ToC is **a bi-directional process** and as such, there is also a downward line from policy to practice of the first three pillars (see Figure 6). This involves ensuring that the policy context enables and facilitates the activity that takes place under the other three pillars.

This connection has emerged with particular emphasis in relation to Pillar 2, i.e., the project should ensure that seeds policies and laws are adapted to the activities that are planned, or rather that the activities or logic that are planned are adapted to the legislation in effect in each country.

However, several partners have noted that this connection/tension between Pillar 2 in each country and existing legislation has been difficult to navigate.

An essential element of the ToC that is also becoming increasingly important in light of Oxfam's restructuring is the demonstrative value of SD=HS.

According to Oxfam Novib and to international experts this is a programme with the potential to provide the evidence (emanating from the four pillars at the national level) that can inform Oxfam´s policy work at the global level.

Figure 7: Demonstrative vs. showcasing

However, there is wide consensus that so far, SD=HS has been able to showcase good practices rather than to demonstrate that the ToC actually works and is sustainable (see Figure 7), with the possible exception of Laos (see section 6.1).

"*If you get a showcase that is built on money* (from SD=HS) *and when you stop the money, it falls away then it is not a real showcase*" (International Expert).

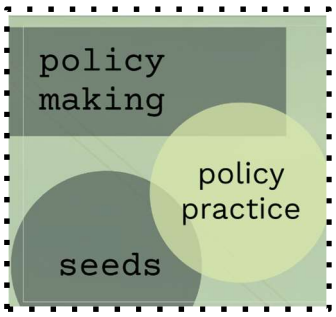
It is also implicit in the logic of Pillar 4 that changes at the global level should trickle down to the national level through legislative changes. However, the MTR could not document examples of this happening yet.

This does not imply that the ToC is wrong. What it means is that the time needed to test the validity of its assumptions is much longer than the programme's duration, even including the two phases (see chapter 6 on Sustainability). This aspect, which seems obvious to all stakeholders consulted, is not made explicit in the programme documents or in Oxfam's negotiations with the donor.

[14] These views were held mainly (but not only) by implementing partners.

[15] Pillar 4 has been quite deliberate in deciding where to focus the policy work particularly since the funding levels for Pillar 4 are low. A scoping study commissioned at the inception of the phase was a deliberate effort to look at the landscape and decide where SDHS should engage policy-wise given the limited human and financial resources.

Figure 8: Policy practice



Stakeholders speak with insistence about a very important element which has no place in the formal logic of the programme (i.e., it has no budget and no specific related activities and just one indicator under Pillar 1). This is the notion of influencing policy practice (see Figure 8), i.e., influencing regulations, capacities, ideological positions, modus operandi, or government budgets without necessarily having to change legislation to do so.

This type of work is particularly prominent in institutionalising FFSs in places such as Laos, Zimbabwe and Nepal (see chapter 6 on Sustainability). However, it does not seem to have the programmatic prominence it requires (see section 7.1.).

The line that links policy work at global and country level should also be bi-directional according to the ToC (see Figure 1). The evaluation did not find evidence of how the work being done on policy at the global level impacts (trickles down) to the work being done at the country level, but it should be noted that this focus on national policy is still relatively new in SD=HS.

2.2. Internal coherence - Synergies and interlinkages between the SD=HS and other interventions carried out by Oxfam.

Synergies and interlinkages between SD=HS and other interventions have been found with many Oxfam Country Offices. For example:

In Nepal, Pillar 2 integrated the lessons from a previously implemented initiative in the Country Office (Enterprise Development Programme). The expertise generated under this programme in the Oxfam Country Office was fully utilised under SD=HS. In fact, although all activities are implemented through the local partner, the substantive leadership of Pillar 2 has been kept in Oxfam Nepal precisely in order to make use of the technical expertise of staff members in this area.

> *"We have an enterprise development project (EDP) in Oxfam Nepal and that supports our projects. We draw on this Enterprise Development Project (EDP) to feed into the SD=HS"* (Oxfam Nepal)

In Uganda, Oxfam's country office has also made use of the office's existing capacity, in this case coming from the *Right to Food* programme, to take the lead on SD=HS Pillar 4.

In Laos, both the first and second phase of SD=HS used the learning coming from an Asian Biodiversity project that focused on seed development (2002-2014).

In Guatemala, the country office has linked SD=HS with issues such as land rights and indigenous rights. These connections are being made more apparent under Oxfam's new cluster structure.

In Laos or in Zambia, the entry point that has linked SD=HS with other initiatives in the office is through gender experts. For example, in Laos, a gender expert is partially financed by the programme (50%) and being utilised by other projects in the office.

In Zambia, Oxfam staff described its role as "to strengthen gender within the programme", in connection to ongoing work championing women's leadership in the seeds sector in the country and the GROW campaign.

In Zimbabwe, SD=HS Pillar 1 is fully integrated with one of the main lines of work of the Oxfam country office which is the transformation of food systems to make them more resilient. Pillar 2 has a distinct focus on women's economic empowerment, which is another important strategic line of the office.

One issue that deserves a separate mention is the connection between SD=HS and Oxfam's major campaigns both nationally and internationally.

Synergies with GROW have been found although they have not been maximised. At the national level, the MTR has only found synergies with the GROW Campaign in Laos, Uganda and Nepal.

> "*We contributed to GROW by organizing food fairs, by informing farmers about their rights*" (Oxfam Nepal)

However, in offices like Peru, the "One Campaign policy" has hindered the potential connections that SD=HS could foster with GROW despite the strategic positioning of the office in the region and the solid history it had working on these themes.

At the global level, SD=HS has been used to showcase success stories in materials produced by different Global Campaigns, for example with the Women's Refugee Commission on Cohort Livelihoods and Risk Analysis (CLARA[16]). However, these connections seem to be anecdotal and organic rather than strategically planned.

2.3. External coherence - Consistency of SD=HS with other actors' interventions in the same contexts.

The MTR has found multiple synergies with non-Oxfam initiatives in the same sector involving a wide range of organisations. Most relevantly, there has been no duplication reported with other programmes and organisations, which suggests that not only is Oxfam well-placed to collaborate with diverse actors, but that it also occupies a unique position in the sector.

The SD=HS programme is collaborating with CSOs such as Welthungerhilfe (sharing various apps and knowledge platforms) and Catholic Relief Services, which was described as probably the only other organization working on seed systems. Although their approaches are different, experiences are being shared and both organisations are working together to conduct field interviews to enquire about experiences of field producers in FSEs in Guatemala, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Existing synergies with breeding institutes, research centres and universities are worth noting. These include strong collaboration with ICTA in Guatemala, with NAFRI in Laos, with NARC in Nepal and with INIA in Peru; the distribution of genetic material and technical support lent by ZARI in Zambia; joint training and backstopping on PPB by ICRISAT; collaboration with CBI and the National Gene Bank in Zimbabwe, and informal arrangements with Super Seeds, an FSE funded by the Swiss development cooperation.

Collaboration with FAO is also extensive, in terms of mutual support developing and distributing materials on the FFS approach, sharing field experiences and engaging in global advocacy efforts in international fora. Most relevantly, it is very important the collaboration with the secretariat of the FAO ITPGRFA, and the complementarity with its Benefit-Sharing Fund[17].

The work with organisations such as UPOV and CGIAR is also noteworthy. Although the approach of Oxfam and these organisations often do not coincide from an ideological point of view, this does not mean that there has not been common work that has been highly valued by different stakeholders consulted. With CGIAR, in particular, the

[16] CLARA is a guidance tool published by the Women's Refugee Commission (WRC) that includes a set of four steps to capture GBV risks associated with pre-crisis livelihoods, as well as the potential risks arising from programmes in response to crisis: 1) secondary data review; 2) primary data collection; 3) data analysis and programme design; and 4) implementation and monitoring (Women's Refugee Commission, "A Double-Edged Sword: Livelihoods in Emergencies (2014).

[17] https://www.fao.org/plant-treaty/areas-of-work/benefit-sharing-fund/projects-funded/en/

strategic alignment with ICRISAT, one of the partner research centres, was highlighted.

EFFICIENCY - How well are resources being used? Understanding the extent to which the resources (financial; human) made available are being used wisely and timely in relation with the changes that the project is contributing to.

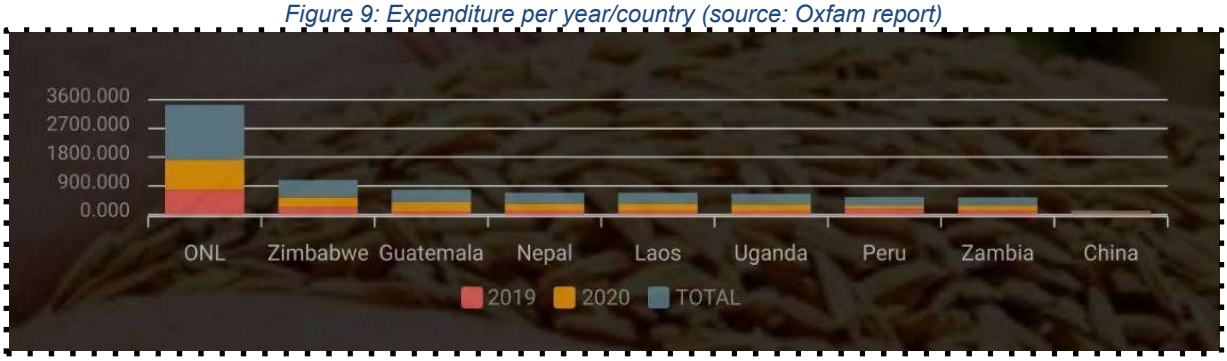
3.1. How well have the various activities/strategies transformed the available resources (financial and human) into the intended results?

3.1.1 Financial resources

The implementation of the SD=HS programme has been transforming available financial resources into a wide range of activities in the eight countries covered by the intervention. Despite administrative challenges related to COVID-19, the overall delivery rate for 2019 and 2020 stands at 89%, with notable differences across countries. ONL and China have the lowest expenditure rates at 75% and 65% respectively[18].

These resources have been distributed among implementing partners, the ON Global Team and Oxfam Country Offices on the basis of work plans submitted and agreed annually that detail the activities to be conducted at the country and global level (see figure 9 for summary of expenditure for 2019 and 2020 per country).

Figure 9: Expenditure per year/country (source: Oxfam report)

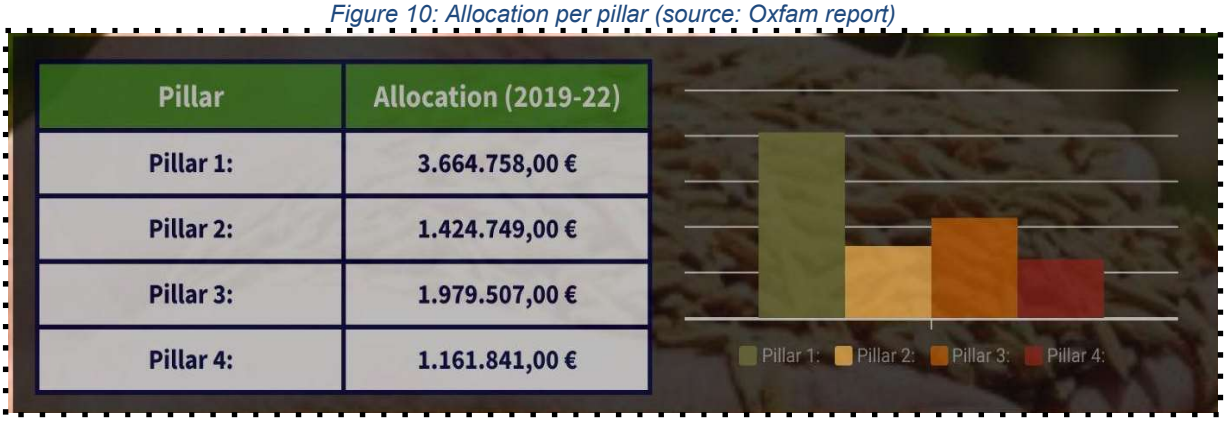


The financial resources allocated to the programme are divided among the four pillars (outcomes) as shown in Figure 10[19].

[18] Figures calculated from the "2020 Full Year Financial Report" and "Monitoring Project SD=HS_Dec2019" excel documents provided.

[19] These figures do not include ICR costs, which are divided across Oxfam Executing Affiliates (namely Oxfam Great Britain, Oxfam Solidarité, Oxfam America and Oxfam Intermón).

Figure 10: Allocation per pillar (source: Oxfam report)



Pillar 1 includes the work on the promotion, establishment and strengthening of FFS and receives the highest budget allocation. Pillar 3 receives the second highest amount to cover FFS that focus on nutrition and local food plants. In terms of resource allocation, these two lines of work are distinct and separate despite sharing a common approach, since both are FFS-based. Furthermore, activities under these two pillars are sometimes conducted in the same communities and even involving the same facilitators in certain cases.

Pillar 2 funds are distributed between 6 of the 8 countries (except Laos and Peru) and the ON Global Team as per figure 11 below. ONL receives nearly 70% of the total funding, while two of the countries that report more results receive 1% (Guatemala) and 2,2% (Nepal) respectively. The funding allocated to five of the six countries lies between 1% and 3% of the budget, while the 6th (Zimbabwe) receives 26.5%.

In 2019, part of the resources under Pillar 2 were not allocated to countries, since several feasibility studies were still underway. Global spending in 2019 amounted to €96.979 (40% of the total expenditure of €254.209). In 2020, global spending on Pillar 2 amounted to €92.590 (36% of the total expenditure of €254.209).

Figure 11: Distribution of funding for pillar 2 (source: Oxfam report)

Pillar 4 is the least resourced component under the programme. Despite its centrality in the programme's Theory of Change, it only receives 14% of the total budget for the full period (2019-22). In this second phase of the programme, the strategy guiding the advocacy and policy work under this pillar has a national focus, as opposed to the global focus of phase 1. Although this strategic shift entails a type of engagement that is more participatory and resource-intensive than the previous

approach, it has not been accompanied by an increase in budget allocation for 2019-22 but has in fact experienced a substantial reduction.

Another aspect worth noting is that the SD=HS programme has a specific budget line for the MEAL component that amounts to €672,402,35 for the whole implementation period and is divided among the 8 countries and the ON Global Team. However, despite the availability of these ear-marked resources for MEAL and the importance of this dimension for capturing results, the rates of expenditure have been surprisingly low (not only in 2020 due to COVID but also in 2019) as detailed in figure 12.

Figure 12: % of delivery rate on MEAL (source Oxfam report)

Country	% spent
China	93%
Guatemala	78%
Zimbabwe	65%
Nepal	58%
Zambia	27%
Uganda	27%
Laos	23%
Peru	0%
ONL	0%

Since 2019, the SD=HS programme has been transforming these resources into results, as evidenced by the range of activities that have been completed during the period covered by this MTR (detailed under Effectiveness). However, the comparative distribution of resources between the Oxfam Novib Global Team and the 8 countries covered by the programme (see figure 10) raises important questions about three key issues of relevance to any development programme, namely: **participation**, **decision-making and accountability**.

Power is often related to control of resources. Hence, the distribution of financial and human resources across stakeholders' conditions to a large extent the dynamics that drive implementation.

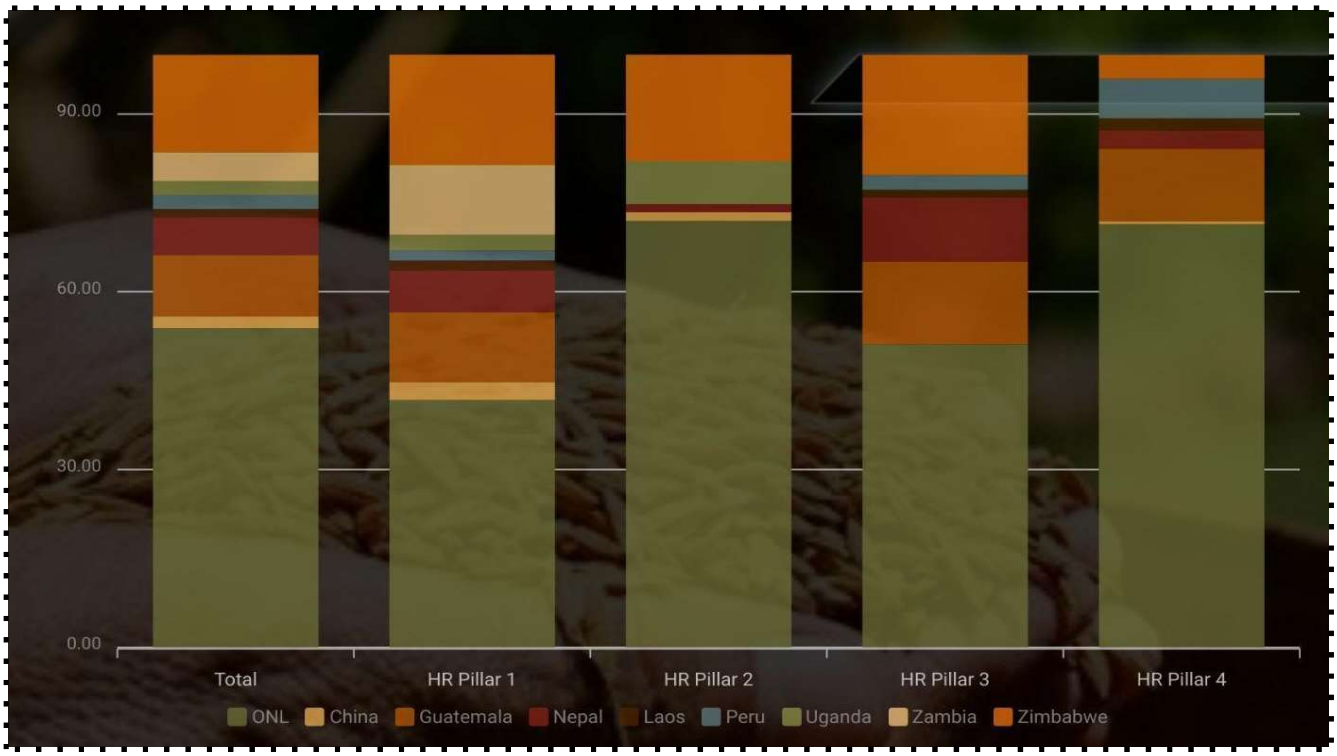
In the case of the SD=HS programme, consulted stakeholders have described **certain asymmetries in decision-making and accountability** that might be related to this allocation of resources. For example, one of the partners noted that when their preference for one of the pillars did not correspond to the preference of the Global Team they had to comply with the latter's choice. Staff from one of the Oxfam Country Offices also acknowledged that the selected partner was the choice of the ON Global Team and they would have selected differently.

Nonetheless, funds have been reallocated from the global to the country level since 2019, bringing the percentage of global expenditure down to €780.962 in 2019 (43% of total annual expenditure, including management costs) and €935.893 in 2020 (38% of total annual expenditure).

3.1.2. Human resources

The programme is implemented with the support of human resources funded directly by the programme in the partner organisations and also in Oxfam offices present in the countries of implementation. These human resources are complemented with the Oxfam Novib Global Team based in The Hague, which lends technical support and backstopping to the partners and is responsible for managing the contract and overseeing the delivery of results as planned. Human resources constitute the highest item in the programme's budget in every country and they are distributed as per Figure 13 below:

Figure 13: Distribution of budget on HR (Source: Oxfam report)



Facilitators constitute valuable human resources that also play a pivotal role in the programme, but they are not reflected in Figure 13 because they do not receive a salary, since the programme only covers transportation costs and expenses related to their engagement in the programme. The **high level of participation** demanded by the programme at all levels (from FFS facilitation to participation in PPB, awareness raising events, advocacy, etc.) raises an important issue that calls for reflection: the invisibility of **time as a fundamental resource for the programme** and a key factor for its success.

Figure 14: Time analysis of facilitators (source: MRT team)

Request from	Via	Engagement	Frequency per week
Hague	Email/WhatsApp	Non formal	10 times
Oxfam country office	Email/Voice mail/Whats App	Formal and Non formal	3 times
Implementing partner	Email/Voice mail/Whats App	Formal and non-formal	7 times
Facilitators/farmers	Mostly voice calls	Non formal	15-20 times

For example, an analysis of the distance between villages and FFS facilitators in Uganda shows that they are expected to travel an average of 14 km without regular public transport in most cases. These time investments by facilitators do not necessarily account for the resources invested.

Another illustrative example comes from an analysis of the average time invested in the project by a master facilitator. As seen in figure 14, much of the time dedicated is labelled as non-formal, i.e., spontaneous and ad-hoc and therefore not accounted for. The amount of time that master facilitators devote to coordinating, coaching, persuading, and informing other facilitators and farmers is especially noteworthy. This function has emerged as key for the success of the FFSs yet somehow has not been adequately dimensioned in terms of investment.

Both master facilitators and facilitators are committed to the programme despite the absence of monetary incentives (in the case of the latter), but there are

conflicting views among partners and Oxfam staff on whether facilitators should be remunerated or not; or at least, if they should be provided with appropriate equipment so that SD=HS does not put unreasonable demands on their time. It is important to note that not one single solution could fit all since the situation varies in different countries. For example, as noted in the workshops where the draft MTR was discussed, in some cases facilitators are government employees.

In any case, consideration of time as a resource is particularly relevant from a gender perspective, since the "double bind" of income poverty and time poverty is particularly pronounced for women. Invisibilizing time as a resource prevents addressing the expansion of decent work opportunities for women alongside investments in social protection, public services and infrastructure that recognize, reduce and redistribute unpaid care and domestic work[20]. In fact, during the MTR, the team collected sufficient evidence to conclude that women´s time was not properly considered. For example, several consulted stakeholders stated that SD=HS was not paying attention to how the time-demands of the project were affecting women participants' well-being. Also, in ParEvo, several stories explicitly ignored tasks that women tend to do (see Participation of Women under 4.3.).

The current distribution of human resources (see Figure 14) between the North and Global South also raises questions about the alignment of the SD=HS programme with the "One Oxfam" reform process and the Global Strategy Framework 2020-2030, which notes that "*to stay relevant and rebuild trust, we will seek to strengthen Oxfam as a network of peers that is deeply rooted in local contexts. We commit to sharing agency and power, both internally and externally*[21]*".* This alignment also foresees a shift to a 70/30 distribution of resources between the Global South and North by 2024, which would require balancing the current distribution of the SD=HS programme.

3.1.3 On resources and participation

The distribution of financial and human resources presented in this section serve to further illustrate the point raised during the Preliminary Findings session about the importance of reflecting on where financial decisions are taken in the SD=HS programme (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Allocation of resources (source: Oxfam report)

This analysis is also useful for better understanding the different notions of participation that have emerged during this MTR. In the absence of participatory budgetary practices and given the concentration of resources in ONL, it does not seem possible for the SD=HS programme to practice a **transformative** form of participation. As discussed under Effectiveness, there is a high level of participation across the programme, but it mainly remains at the **representative** and **instrumental** levels since implementing partners cannot be empowered to decide and act for themselves when key decisions and resources remain centralised. However, findings suggest that the participation of farmers in FFS can be considered closer to a **transformative** level (see 4.3).

20https://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2019/world-survey-on-the-role-of-women-in-development-2019.pdf?la=en&vs=2027

21 "Oxfam Strategic Framework 2020-2030", p.23.

3.2. To what extent did the management, coordination and administrative arrangements sufficiently ensure a cost-efficient and accountable implementation of the program?

The governance structure of the SD=HS programme is clearly defined in the Project Implementation Manual (PIM), which sets out the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders involved. Oxfam Novib is the formal contract holder, and the programme is managed by a Project Management Unit (PMU) based in The Hague and supervised by a Steering Committee (SC). A Global Project Advisory Committee (GPAC) provides strategic advice to the Steering Committee. Both the SC and GPAC were set up to give greater voice and power to the partners and Oxfam Country Offices in the governance of the programme. At the country level, Oxfam Country Offices sign agreements with national partners and appoint Country Project Leads that manage the programme in each country.

3.2.1. Coordination between the ON Global Team (PMU) and implementing partners:

The partners implementing the SD=HS programme constitute one of its key strengths. The ON Global Team (PMU) is composed of a Project Manager, a Senior Finance Officer, a Communications Officer, a Participatory Knowledge Management and Learning Officer, four Pillar Leads and part-time technical advisors. The position of Communications Officer has been vacant since January 2021, while the Participatory Knowledge Management and Learning Officer was only recruited in December 2020.

The PMU provides key technical support to partners, and contributes the "Oxfam brand", while partners also bring a global reputation as well as a high level of capacity and commitment to the programme.

Communication between the partners and the ON Global Team is fluid and positively rated by consulted stakeholders. However, the current governance arrangements do not only require coordination with Oxfam Country Offices at the country level, but also with ON at the global level. This can include up to 4 parallel channels (depending on the number of pillars covered in each country), coupled with communications with other members of the ON Global Team on administrative issues. This is highly demanding and sometimes overwhelming for the partners. It should also be noted that as a result of this pillar-based structure, no member of the ON Global Team has a "full country picture", which limits the opportunities for a holistic approach to programme support.

The added value of the ON Global Team is not always clear to stakeholders, who note that there are times when their local technical expertise is not respected, and they feel micromanaged. Partners do not have identical skills and expertise in all target countries, and hence require tailored methodological approaches. Evidence suggests that programme efforts in this direction do not always meet the more specific context-based needs and expectations of stakeholders.

3.2.2. Coordination between Oxfam Country Offices and implementing partners:

One of the main changes introduced in Phase 2 was the assignment of a management and implementation role to Oxfam Country Offices through the establishment of Oxfam Partner Agreements (OPAs) between Oxfam Novib and Oxfam Country Offices and MoU or contracts between Oxfam Country Offices and national partners. This change was the result of a global push by the Oxfam Confederation to restructure the presence of its affiliates in the countries, with a view to decentralising and developing a streamlined "One Oxfam" model. Consulted stakeholders have acknowledged that questions were raised by both the ON Global Team and implementing partners on the added value of involving country offices, especially given the science-based nature of the programme and the limited technical capacity of Oxfam Country Offices. This adaptation process took a lot of effort on the part of all stakeholders involved, including Oxfam Country Offices, which had to adapt to Oxfam Novib's administrative rules.

In Phase 1, Oxfam Country Offices were not meaningfully involved in programme implementation, since their role was limited to formally signing off plans and reports. In Phase 2, Oxfam Country Offices provide administrative and contract management support, as well as advocacy and policy work under Pillar 4. This change in the coordination structure has brought advantages and disadvantages for partners and stakeholders who were used to liaising with the ON Global Team directly during Phase 1. However, although there is consensus that Phase 1 was better coordinated at the global level, Phase 2 has been much more participatory at the national level. As a consulted partner noted, *"there was an insistence from the start to involve more stakeholders at the national level for mainstreaming and sustainability purposes".*

Some implementing partners describe great mutual support and collaboration and value a "*second eye*" on reports, as well as the monitoring support they receive from Oxfam Country Offices. This arrangement is considered better for cost-effective monitoring of activities and in terms of financial risk management. Oxfam Country Offices now disburse the funds as necessary, instead of delivering a single tranche, and they provide grant-management support.

Consulted stakeholders have also noted that the processes in place for developing work plans have improved in Phase 2. Communication has improved, since at the beginning of this second phase, emails had to be sent from the ON Global Team to Oxfam Country Offices first and it took time for these communications to be forwarded to partners. The agreement that the ON Global Team can be contacted by implementing partners directly for technical issues and vice-versa has made the three-tier relation more agile.

Oxfam's efforts to decentralise the team also led to the recruitment of a Roving Technical Officer for African countries, which has been considered highly positive for the programme. This position sought to promote cross-country exchanges and support linking and learning efforts. A similar position for South-East Asia was planned but not filled due to the onset of the pandemic.

Despite these positive aspects, certain partners who were involved in Phase 1 still see Oxfam Country Offices as adding an unnecessary administrative layer and note that the limited technical and administrative capacities and resources of COs have translated into bottlenecks and delays. They regret not having been given a choice, which suggests that the logic of these implementation changes (i.e., the "One Oxfam" model) was not clear to all the stakeholders involved. There was also the additional challenge of downsized teams and capacities in Oxfam Country Offices as a result of this restructuring.

In countries where Pillar 4 is led by Oxfam Country Offices, some stakeholders have voiced concerns about conflicting political approaches and the high level of bureaucracy. They also noted that they already conducted numerous advocacy-related activities and had resources that they could not resort to because Oxfam Country Offices led. The question of who is better positioned to influence at the national level was raised during the MTR and there were conflicting views on whether it is the partners or Oxfam Country Offices.

In Nepal and Laos, the existence of previous ties between the implementing partners and Oxfam Country Offices has had positive effects on implementation, and strong partnerships were described (especially in the case of LI-Bird and Oxfam Nepal).

Finally, stakeholders also noted that this new set up has brought a duplication of reporting lines, since in practice, implementing partners are reporting to both the ON Global Team and Oxfam Country Offices. Nonetheless, the fact that no complaints have been voiced at the Advisory Group level suggests that stakeholders are gradually adjusting to the coordination arrangements introduced in Phase 2 with good implementation results.

3.2.3. Coordination between the ON Global Team (PMU) and Oxfam Country Offices:

The coordination set up for Phase 2 was described by an ON staff member as "*an arranged marriage where we had to look for the positives*". In most countries, cooperation between the ON Global Team and Oxfam Country Offices was described as fruitful, while in others it has been more challenging, partly as a result of tensions related to the choice of partners, since the voice of the ON Global Team has been decisive in determining partner selection. Issues around conflict resolution in relation to the exit of the programme's first Peruvian partner (Andes) and the issues emerging from the sustainability strategy of one of the FSEs (Champion Seeds) have also emerged during this MTR as complex situations that had to be solved in a concerted manner and proved challenging.

Some Oxfam Country Offices (namely Laos and Zimbabwe, with experience in the GALS methodology) have brought gender expertise to the programme, while others have brought local knowledge and strategic connections. However, in most cases, the contribution of Oxfam Country Offices has been limited to administrative support, which has led to discussions on whether the overhead costs and salaries would have been better spent directly on the partner organisations.

This coordination mechanism has been marked by two global processes affecting the Oxfam Confederation and Oxfam Novib. The first was the previously mentioned "One Oxfam" approach, which brought about a complex process of merging offices and creating clusters in the regions covered by the programme. A new structure has become effective in July 2021 for Southern Africa (including Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) that has led to a re-positioning of the programme in new units and a similar process of restructuring is taking place in Asia and Latin America. Stakeholders have regretted the limited information available on these new arrangements and on how they will affect the coordination of the programme over the coming months.

The second relevant process has been Oxfam Novib's recent restructuring in 2020 and the new structure introduced in April 2021. As a result of the changes (which made redundant a significant number of ON staff), the SD=HS programme has been integrated into a larger team (Green Climate Resilience). The programme's current focus on seed systems and smallholders seems to be less of a priority in this new thematic group. Some Oxfam Novib staff see this change as an opportunity for framing future proposals under this new umbrella, while others see it as a threat, at a time when the new ON leadership is more focused on campaigning and influencing than on conducting field-based work.

Apart from these complex processes, the SD=HS programme was also faced with the global challenge of COVID-19 in 2020. The SD=HS team managed to transform the training modules and set-up from Face-to-Face to online within 3 months, while partners had to adjust their methodologies and make more use of their mobile phones. Apart from COVID-19, partners also dealt with extreme weather events and elections in several countries. Bearing these diverse challenges in mind, it was remarkable that the programme still advanced as well as it did in 2020.

This suggests that despite the above-mentioned difficulties, the ON Global Team, Oxfam Country Offices and implementing partners have succeeded in efficiently coordinating and managing resources to ensure timely approval of budgetary changes so that funds could be spent with positive results.

EFFECTIVENESS - What has been done? Assessing the extent to which SD=HS is being implemented as planned, including the analysis of the most salient factors facilitating or hindering implementation.

Assessing the extent to which SD=HS activities have been implemented as planned in 2019 and 2020 has been challenging due to three factors: firstly, the absence of operational plans for 2019 to compare reported annual results against planned results; secondly, the discrepancies that exist between the figures reported in the

monitoring tool (Outcome Overview) and in the annual reports for 2020[22]; and thirdly, the absence of specific targets for some of the indicators measuring progress towards programme outcomes.

Hence, the MTR has focused on providing an overview of the results reported in 2020 as detailed in country reports. These reports point to positive results under the different outcomes, as outlined in the sections below.

4.1 What are the program's key accomplishments in relation to what was planned in the different countries and through the four components?

4.1.1. Pillar 1

Under this component, the total cumulative number of FFS reported in 2020 was 428 and distributed as follows:

Figure 16: Summary of key accomplishments under pillar 1 per country

Guatemala	25 FFS have been created around potato, maize and bean crops, while smallholder farmers gained access to 37 varieties coming from different sources (14 from ICTA, 8 from ASOCUCH, 7 from seed banks and 8 from farmers). A positive result to note is that 40% came from local sources and were linked to 12 seed banks storing maize and beans.
Nepal	64 FFS on PPB have been organized: 25 FFS on PVS (22 on Wheat, 2 on Potato and 1 on Rapeseed) in 2019 and 39 in 2020, out of which 15 FFS (PVE – 5 on rice and 2 on soybean; and PVS – 7 on rice and 1 on soybean) have been completed and 24 FFS on PVS (4 on potato and 20 on wheat) are ongoing. The project team coordinated with the National Plant Breeding and Genetics Research Centre, National Wheat Research Program, and Directorate of Agriculture Research (Doti) to obtain suitable germplasms based on the breeding objectives for the wheat and with Horticultural Research Station (Rajikot, Jumla) and LI-BIRD for the potato's germplasm.
Laos	31 new FFS were established in 2020 and 30 field studies were conducted. There were 17 PVS for rice and 18 FS for rice seed multiplication but mungbean, soybean and peanut varieties were also included. NAFRI introduced 14 new varieties for PVS (9 of them selected with higher yield), as well as 178 segregating populations for PPB.
Peru	30 FFS groups are working on PPB, 28 seed banks have been supported (14 Ha and 3505 Kg of seed sowed to supply the future seed banks) and 33 plots for PVS with 33 varieties of potato, quinoa, broad bean and barley have been set up.
Uganda	40 new FFS groups were established. Under ESAFF, 11 FFS successfully achieved their breeding objectives while at PELUM, an evaluation exercise concluded that NARO Bean 6 and NARO Bean 7 were tolerant to drought, resistant to pest and diseases, and also high yielding. 4 seed banks were established in Soroti (2), Nebbi (1) and Omoro (1).

[22] For example: under 1.1. the SeedsGROW Annual Plan includes a target of 400 new FFS (p.12); while the Revised Plan mentions 325 FFS (without clarifying whether they are new or not), (p.8); while the Outcome Overview Outcome Excel tool includes a target of 249 FFS; and the Annual 2020 Report mentions 250 (p.15). In terms of reported results, the Outcome Overview Outcome Excel tool includes 482 FFS achieved, while 400 FFS are included in the Annual 2020 Report (p. 15).

Zambia	17 new FFS are working on PVS, with two of them also developing composite populations of maize. Three nurseries working on PVD have been established to develop a variety of sorghum in collaboration with a breeder and two community seed banks have been built with the support of other donors. Agreements have also been reached with research centres and breeders.
Zimbabwe	145 FFS were established in 19-20 and 200 in 20-21.IN terms of their degree of success, the report notes that 8/10 were successful in PVD, 29/45 in PVS, 23/32 in PVE and 37/58 in diversity plots. Two local varieties of sorghum (Tsvimboyemupositori and Cimezele) and one pearl millet variety (Nyati)are currently in the process of registration.

Country annual reports are not homogeneous in providing figures on FFS. Some of the above-mentioned figures are clearly cumulative, while others are not. The table below provides a summary of relevant data extracted from the annual reports on results under Pillar 1.

Figure 17: Summary of results reported under Pillar 1

	FFS 2019	FFS 2020	PVD-PPB	PVS	PVE	Plots	Seed multiplicati on	Accessed varieties and breeding lines
Guatemala	8	25		?				37
Peru		30				33		22
Uganda		86		32	8			30
Zambia	33	17	3	17				39
Zimbabwe	145	200	21	121	62	141	?	150
Laos	30	31	18	17		30	18	162
Nepal	25	39		33	7			51
TOTAL	**211**	**428**	**42**	**220**	**77**	**204**	**18**	**491**

The analysis of the annual reports from the different countries reveals that there is clear focus on quantitative process indicators related to outputs, for example, the number of FFS established. There are exceptions though. In the case of Pillars 1 and 3, the reports from Zimbabwe and Uganda go beyond reporting on outputs and clearly mention the level of success achieved by the FFS (although they do not specify the criteria against which they have been assessed). It is expected that the introduction of Kobo as a documentation tool (see box on Kobo under 7.1.) can serve to report more systematically beyond outputs, i.e., on results and how they contribute to change.

Reports from Peru, Zimbabwe and Laos mention the promotion of certain plots. Although their objective is not clearly defined, they seem to serve training purposes associated with the FFS. In the case of Zimbabwe, most are seed multiplication plots, while some are diversity plots.

The results summarized in the table suggest that there is a clear preference for PVS (Plant Variety Selection) over PVE (Plant Variety Enhancement) and PVD (Plant Variety Development, called PPB in Laos). The level of choice of each mode is inversely proportional to its technical complexity. Another reason that has been suggested to explain the prevalence of PVS is the need to select lines from breeding institutes, enhancing farmers' crop diversity as a first step.

The predominance of PVS and PVD, both based on genetic material provided by research institutions, shows the good functioning of the relationship with NARS and CGIAR organisations and can be considered a key achievement of the project.

In the case of PVE, both its distribution and overall results seem limited to date. As mentioned above, PVE has produced two sorghum and one millet variety in Zimbabwe (currently in the process of registration), with no new varieties reported in Uganda and Nepal. However, it is important to consider the years of continuous work required for improving a local variety through PVE under the prevailing technical conditions.

The idea of promoting small grains instead of maize in Zones IV and V of Zimbabwe is very aligned with climate change adaptation and food security.

The capacity of the farmers trained in Pillar 1 to produce seed for Pillar 2 seems evident. However, ICRISAT has expressed doubts about the capacity of farmers to manage segregating populations, according to the annual report. This indicates that training efforts must continue in order to ensure the quality of production.

Since biodiversity enhancement constitutes one of the programme's objectives, access to almost 500 varieties in all countries can also be considered a success story that has been possible as a result of the programme's solid relationships with institutions.

4.1.2. Pillar 2

The results reported in the countries supporting the development of FSEs were positive to different degrees, given the diverse nature of activities under this component and the different stages of FSE development across countries.

Guatemala	Four cooperatives have been involved in the sale of potato and bean seed. Business plans have been developed but even at the feasibility study stage, they have already produced 161 tons of seed (158 of potatoes and 3 tons of beans), of which 83 tones (80 potatoes and 3 beans) have been marketed, with an income of US$ 54,600. ASOCUCH's systemic technical assistance approach has enabled FSE support in the following areas: (a) training processes on Promotion and Sales Techniques; b) designing and implementing Facebook and Whatsapp business pages for potato and bean FSE; c) brand design for potato seed (Cuchusemillas) which will be used in conjunction with the 3 FSE; (d) elaboration of 2 catalogues of potato seed and bean varieties; e) packaging and traceability support. A letter of understanding has been signed with ICTA for bean genetic material and post-harvest services will provide basic potato material.
Nepal	Although one of the three FSEs faced mismanagement issues, the other two strengthened their managerial tools, equipment and storage capacity. The mechanisation approach introduced has brought about positive benefits, especially for women who are now saving time on seed cleaning, as evidenced in the stories shared through Sprockler. A pilot study for FFS in seed production and marketing has been conducted in 2021.
Peru	A pilot study for FFS in seed production and marketing has been conducted in 2021.
Uganda	A pilot study for FFS in seed production and marketing has been conducted in 2021.
Zambia	A concept note on farmer seed enterprise developed by CTDT and the Oxfam team, has been approved to conduct a pilot study on FFS in seed production and marketing in 2021.

Zimbabwe	The FSE receiving the support of the SD=HS programme (Champion Seeds- CS) sells 85% commercial seed (mostly maize) and 15% small grains. Commercial seed sales are good, but small grains have suffered losses due to climate-related factors, and CS has required funds from the project to overcome these challenges. CS has set up around 100 demonstration plots in FFS sites, helping communities to evaluate the advantages of its early-maturing, drought tolerant varieties.899 small-scale seed growers from the five farmer associations have been contracted and trained on seed production and quality control. Available data suggests that income earned by seed growers from hybrid maize seed is as much as 85% higher than what they could have earned from growing grain, 50% higher in the case of seed groundnuts than in grain groundnuts, and 21% higher in the case of small grains. This is important because it shows that multiplication is a clear source of income for SHFs. The 2019/20 cropping seasons showed a significant shift in the FSEs crop portfolio with a move away from maize seed production to a greater proportion of small grains (i.e., where maize accounted for 2%, pearl millet accounted for 34% and sorghum for 56% of seed sold). A pilot study for FFS in seed production and marketing has been conducted in 2021.

FSEs have a commercial and a social component. Separating both in the accounting was not possible at the beginning, since they were intertwined by design, but in the last year it has become possible. In the case of Guatemala, this has been easier than in Zimbabwe. This separation is crucial for clearly defining the role of stakeholders in the social part, as well as determining how much should be paid to cover this dimension and how to keep it separate in the accounts.

FSEs business plans and accounts

It is not a question of expecting a FSE to be profitable in the short term, but to have accounting and business plans that are able to make the contribution of international cooperation or government subsidies visible and that include the investments made. There is no reason to reject plans with negative financial indicators or to demand excessive profitability from organisations that defend biodiversity, which is a common good, but there is a need to be aware of the importance of the subsidised part.

It is often seen that companies in which part of the funding comes from aid projects have excellent project accounting (donor requirement) and very poor company accounting. It is advisable to make sure that both accounts have the quality of information needed to make informed decisions.

Evidence from the SD=HS programme suggests that the regulation of the seed market determines the path taken by the FSEs. Where they produce from registered varieties supplied by breeders, the FSEs do not have their intellectual property. If the FSEs choose to work on landraces (PVE), the result has to be registered, and registration is not easy. Hence, the role of the SD=HS programme is to provide the training and for farmers to decide which is the best option among the various options available.

Another issue worth highlighting is that FSEs do not have their own research and development resources, so in order to have access to foundation seed, a plant breeder is needed. PPB is the research part of the SD=HS programme's work under Pillar 2, but, under current conditions, it is the NARS that own the rights in the case of PVS and landraces are difficult to register.

It has also been noted that in **Guatemala** and **Zimbabwe**, side-selling constitutes a threat, since if the SHFs do not get paid the committed amounts of seed, when necessary, they look for another buyer. This is typical of cooperative operations but the experience from this programme shows that accelerating payments (like in **Nepal**) or rewarding loyalty are among the possible solutions.

4.1.3. Pillar 3

The following results were reported per country under this component:

Guatemala	7 FFS were created using the SH-HS methodology around the best use of sub-used species, which has allowed farmers to access an average of 15 different edible species, while 39 indigenous communities have been documenting NUS. In addition, 300 home gardens were established, reaching 1,500 farmers in 27 communities. Exchanges online were organised to discuss successes and limitations of NUS, although the agrobiodiversity fairs that were initially planned had to be suspended because of COVID.
Nepal	Although the 7 FFS that have been created are still in the diagnostic phase, the support lent to a women's cooperative that uses machinery to produce and sell a transformed NUS (stinging nettle powder) constitutes a promising development.
Laos	A baseline survey including 61 interviews was conducted and two ToT training courses on local plants were held. In addition, 6 FFS were established.
Peru	The baseline was completed, and 303 surveys conducted. A total of 15 FFS were created with the participation of 255 families and 60 varieties of local plants have been identified, mostly wild plants.
Uganda	Activities in Pillar 3 have been based on plant identification and diffusion. Participating farmers have identified 70 plants, established an intergenerational dialogue on the usefulness of NUS for nutritional and medicinal purposes and developed recipe books.30 FFS on local food plants have been established to date.
Zambia	20 FFS were established with 350 participants, two baseline surveys were conducted, and a six-week ToT online course on improving nutrition was held.
Zimbabwe	A total of 70 NUS FFS (37 old and 33 new NUS FFS) were reached, 32 of them conducted diagnostic surveys, and unfortunately only 10 FFS were able to see their crops to physiological maturity and harvesting, since most of the FFS were affected by the 2019-2020 season. These results suggest that the capacity of NUS to alleviate the lean reason may be overrated.

As part of FFS work under Pillar 3, farmers implement a wide range of activities. Some are focused on plant management e.g. (seed storage, sowing local food plants, vegetative propagation, seed germination and breaking seed dormancy, sustainable harvesting of wild food plants); while others are focused on nutrition and cooking (e.g., food preservation, food preparation and cooking demonstrations). In addition, farmers also focus on developing seed fairs and food fairs, growing local plants in home gardens and creating school gardens; and in some countries (such as Zambia) FFS activities are linked to the construction of community seed banks.

The results of the Pillar 3 baseline study suggest that local food plants have the potential to contribute to addressing food scarcity. For instance, the analysis of the assessment of men's and women's knowledge of local food plants indicates that in Guatemala, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe, more than 60% of local food plants could be used in times of severe food scarcity; followed by Nepal and Peru where more than one third of the plants have this potential.

Nonetheless, the experience of the SD=HS programme in **Zimbabwe** raises an important question regarding the effectiveness of NUS: in places with higher biodiversity and biomass production (Peru, Uganda, Guatemala) there were no reported problems in accessing NUS in times of crisis. However, in Zimbabwe's Zone V, where food insecurity situations are more extreme due to droughts, the extent to which NUS could contribute to food security was not clear. In fact, SD=HS has introduced other alternatives to help ensure the availability of NUS during times of scarcity,

depending on the type of plants, environment and cultural practices. For instance, food preservation – through the use of solar dryers – was a key activity of FFS in Zimbabwe that allowed farmers to increase the availability of local vegetables (NUS) in times of food insecurity.

In the final evaluation of the first phase, the question was asked as to whether NUS "will be able to compete with the impetus of many farmers to grow [commercial varieties of] vegetables. *Vegetables are usually easier to grow and there is a higher market demand and therefore income potential*, while at the same time achieving the goal of improved nutrition when consumed in the daily diet". At the time of this MTR, questions on the relevance of maintaining the promotion of NUS despite the existence of more commercial alternatives (even if they are not traditional) remain.

The analysis of the baseline study conducted (including a household survey and an evaluation of the nutritional value of local food plants prioritized by countries) is ongoing. The existing MEAL under Pillar 3 is being strengthened through the development of FFS monitoring tools as part of the Online Course on Nutrition and Local Food Plants that preceded the establishment of Pillar 3 FFS. In 2021, detailed guidelines have been introduced to accompany the reporting formats for the FFS end of cycle evaluation that is taking place after the first year of implementation.

Despite these monitoring tools, it has not been possible to establish links between local and traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge, due to the lack of verification of claims about the virtues of local species and their effects on nutrition or health. Nonetheless, a list of 'champion species' is being prepared for each country (including the plants that are more nutrient rich, add diversity to the diet, are available during the food scarcity period, and help to tackle the main nutritional problems in the project implementation areas).

4.1.4. Pillar 4

Key accomplishments at the global level have been noted on the advocacy and policy fronts. The first success to note is that the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) council requested taking into consideration Oxfam's proposal as defined in the paper "Can the Exchange or sale of self-produced seed be allowed under UPOV 1991?", which establishes the rights that certified seed producers have over their commercial production, as well as farmers' rights to sell part of this production.

Another success under this pillar has been the programme's contribution to the decision by the European Patent Office (EPO) to disallow patenting plants resulting from conventional breeding. The loopholes were presented in Oxfam's report "The Status of Patenting Plants in the Global South", which analyses the situation of patent laws affecting plants in multiple countries, the international framework and how legal provisions on patents are classified. Apart from stating Oxfam's position against patenting plants, the report also offers recommendations to countries and how they might secure farmers' rights through available legal mechanisms. The level of detail provided in the case studies is excellent and shows the level of knowledge that country teams have available to do their advocacy work.

At the national level, several achievements have also been noted, included the following:

Guatemala	ASOCUCH has been broadcasting radio spots about farmers rights under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Agriculture and Food for the last five years. Radio has been a powerful tool for conveying clear messages mainly in Mayan languages (Kanjobal, Popti and Mam), reaching more than 3,000 farmers. Lobbying processes were carried out with the respective units in the Ministry of Livestock Agriculture and Food (MAGA), for the activation of the Technical Committee on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (COTERFAA) and progress in the process of approving the

	National Seed Policy for submission to the General Secretariat of Planning (SEGEPLAN).
Nepal	A webinar on "Contribution of Agrobiodiversity in Food and Nutrition Security in Nepal" was held with the participation of 60 participants who were invited to talk on the importance of traditional crops in food and nutrition security, good practices and uses of agrobiodiversity.
Laos	The programme has contributed to the passing of a Decree on Plant Varieties, approved in May 2020, which establishes the principles, regulations and measures on management and inspection of plant varieties to conserve a native plant variety, a local plant variety, and promote the use of an improved plant variety and a new plant variety that has outstanding characteristics.
Peru	A diagnosis of the current state of research on the access, production, and trade of seeds was carried out and a Plan for Mass Use of High-Quality Local Seeds is currently being completed. An alliance was established between Oxfam in Peru and CONVEAGRO for the provision of communication tools for the family farming sector, which was seriously affected at the beginning of the pandemic due to restriction measures. Several infographics requesting a reactivation fund for the farming sector were made to complement CONVEAGRO's advocacy campaign; the government responded with the Farmer Support Fund of 2 billion soles for FOVIDA and Oxfam in Peru became part of the GMO-free Peru Platform, made up of civil society organisations with the objective of extending the moratorium on the entry of transgenic products into the country. Both organisations signed a statement where they expressed their commitment to promoting the measure, and the extension of the moratorium until 2035 was approved in October.
Uganda	The SD=HS team participated in the 2nd National Agroecology Actors Symposium held on 30th and 31st October 2020 and in the 10th Annual Indigenous Food Fair on PGRFRA policy.
Zambia	An internal policy advisory strategy to guide ZAAB's stakeholder group was developed and implemented. This strategy sets out specific policy demands related to the legal recognition of farmers' rights and the withdrawal of application for UPOV91 membership. This objection to UPOV91 membership was presented to the Director of Agriculture and other relevant government actors.
Zimbabwe	CTDT engaged the Crop Breeding Institute (CBI) to draft a paper on how local seed varieties could be registered in Zimbabwe. The document highlighted the guidelines and procedures that are necessary for the registration of farmer varieties at national and regional level. The Pillar 4 team reviewed the Seed Certification Scheme Notice 2000 and Plant Breeder's Act. Furthermore, a workshop on the Development of Descriptors and Guidelines to Facilitate the Registration of Farmer Varieties was held in Harare on the 27th of February 2020.

However, experience to date suggests that it remains difficult to translate advocacy achievements at the global level (especially those related to raising awareness of farmers' rights) into changes in national laws. It is even more difficult to ensure that they are reflected in practice in annual budgets, so that institutions devote resources to doing what they say they will do. The lack of technical capacity in governments to take the first step, changes in legislation, constitutes a key limiting factor.

4.1.5. China:

Despite its status as a "learning and linking" partner, China has reported similar results to the 7 partner countries. The 2020 Annual report notes that the SD=HS programme directly reached 500 farmers and indigenous people in four communities

(60% women). Although the number of FFS established was not specified, three pilot communities have been established and 17 master trainers have received training. Under Pillar 2, Rongyan farmers' cooperative (FSE) has selected chayote seed as a 'smart variety' to increase its market share and the possibility of registering a collective trademark of the chayote seeds is being explored. Finally, various research and communication products have been completed, including a report ("Seeds: Global Challenges and Chinese Realities"), a policy brief submitted to the Chinese Academy of Sciences on "Building Government-led, Multi-stakeholder Participation and Benefit Sharing Mechanisms in Crop Genetic Resource Conservation and Healthy Development of the Farmers' Seed Systems" as well as various articles on farmers' stories. The Community Resource Flow Map of Local Food Plants and Seasonal Calendar were also completed.

4.2. What lessons can be drawn from the factors that have facilitated or hindered successful implementation in the different countries?

ENABLING

.- **Governments** are **paying more attention** to seed protection, agroecology and food systems.

.- **Global** conducive environment and **new discourses** on climate change.

.- **Dependence** of many countries **on SHFs** and hence relevance of the programme.

.- Strong **methodology** for pillar 1 and 2.

.- Good **collaboration** between breeders, farmers, scientists, partners and other stakeholders.

.- Relationship with **NARS**, CGIAR and private sector in the provision of stable and segregation lines (for P1) and foundation seed (for P2).

.- Excellent **dissemination to farmers**.

.- Climate change has **risen** in everyone's **agenda** (including SHFs).

.- High levels of **trust** among partners.

.- Implementation takes place through structures that are **already on the ground**.

.- **Collaborative** strategy of co-creation **with the communities**.

.- **Partners** are **well-respected**, apolitical and non-confrontational.

.- Use of **technology** has helped activities continue during COVID-19.

.- **Government** participation and **engagement**.

.- **Multi-stakeholder** collaboration and networks.

HINDERING

.- **COVID-19**.

.- **Absence** of registration and certification **systems** and clear **guidelines**.

.- **Limited political understanding** of climate adaptation and environmental issues.

.- **Climate change**-related factors (droughts and double rainfalls).

.- **Challenging policy** environments.

.- Limited **government resources** (extension workers, nutritionists and breeders are few).

.- **Community work lacks recognition** from mainstream actors and governments.

.- **Election processes** in several countries.

.- **Legal environment** (esp. for P2).

.- Lack of adequate **MEAL** system for P3.

.- **Side selling** in some FSEs.

.- Difficulty of **translating global advocacy** achievements into changes in national laws.

4.3. To what extent has there been a fair and balanced participation of different stakeholder groups in the program?

> "*Participatory approaches require us to look critically at power and ultimately to redistribute it*" (Naomi Falkenburg, 2021)

This MTR has found impressive levels of participation across activities and countries. Given the importance of understanding the concept of participation and its potential implications of the SD=HS programme, Cornwall's participation ladder has been used as a framework to facilitate reflection on the types of participation that have emerged (see Figure 18).

Figure 18: Cornwall's participation ladder

Form of participation	What P means for the implementing agency	What P means for the receiving end	What it is for
Nominal	Legitimation: to show that they're doing something	Inclusion: to retain some access to potential benefits	Display
Instrumental	Efficiency: draw on community to be more cost effective	Cost: time spent on project-related labour	To achieve cost-effectiveness and local facilities
Representative	Sustainability: to avoid creating dependency	Leverage: to influence the shape the project	Support people in determining their own development
Transformative	Empowerment: to strengthen capacity to decide and act	Empowerment: to be able to decide and act for themselves	Both as a means and an end, a continuous dynamic

It can be argued that **the intention** of the programme is to promote a **transformative** form of participation, as evidenced by the implementation approach and the types of methodologies and practices that have been developed and applied. The ON Global Team often refers to empowerment in discussions as one of the core objectives of applying participatory methodologies such as PPB and seeks to attain increased recognition of the role played by smallholder farmers in agriculture. These aspects are central to the overall narrative of the SD=HS programme, which from a conceptual perspective can be said to conceive participation "both as a means and an end, as a continuous dynamic" in line with a transformative form of participation.

In this sense, many of the **methodologies** used especially with SHFs are most **definitely empowering and transformative**, from a participatory point of view (see Participation Ladder above). Most significantly, the methodology used in the FFS to engage farmers.

In terms of programme **management and governance**, there are conflicting views across the programme about the extent to which **decision-making** is participatory. It has to be acknowledged that during implementation SD=HS has fostered participation and flexibility, for example in the design of the annual plans. However, on the one hand, key decisions on aspects such as the choice of pillars to work on or the choice of partners remain centralised. On the other hand, some implementing partners view their participation as **instrumental** (see Participation Ladder above) when they consider the cost of the time they spend on programme-related work and the limited incentives they receive (especially in the case of facilitators).

It has also been observed that Phase 2 has developed stronger forms of participation that can be said to lie somewhere between the **instrumental** and **representative** categories. Increased participation at the country level was part of the quest for sustainability promoted by the ON Global Team through decreased dependency, while implementing partners acknowledge that this approach has made strategies more grounded at the community level in this second phase.

Although consulted stakeholders noted that this shift had provided more opportunities to influence programme management, as already noted, **decisions on the distribution of funding across implementing partners, Oxfam Country Offices and ONL remain centralised**. Furthermore, the fact that ONL receives the majority of the resources available calls for reflection on whether participatory approaches are leading to balanced distribution of power (and resources) across stakeholders (as discussed under Efficiency).

Given the focus of the programme on women, youth and indigenous peoples, special attention has been given to analysing the participation of these three groups, as developed in the sections below.

A comprehensive gender approach that has benefited the participation of women

A wide range of positive results have been noted in relation to the promotion of women's participation through the SD=HS programme. The agriculture and seeds sector are male-dominated (including the international institutions that the programme is trying to influence under Pillar 4). It is men who have greater decision-making power, while women make up over 50% of the agricultural workforce in most countries (FAO, 2021). This reality constitutes a challenge but also represents an opportunity for the programme to contribute to changing this situation in the target countries by meaningfully engaging women.

Overall, there have been significant levels of women's participation in the programme, as evidenced at several levels. It is important to highlight that women's participation is the result of concerted efforts by stakeholders to actively promote women's engagement through a range of strategies that are adapted to each context of operation. This was also reflected in the adequate representation of women in the stakeholder map (29 out of 76) and reported by consulted stakeholders across the programme.

At the FFS level, there are many examples of the positive measures taken to facilitate women's participation. First, in the formal constitution of each FFS it is written that women must be released from other obligations to come to FFS if they need to conduct plant observations in the morning. Women also have adequate spaces to share their preferences of seed traits so that their views can be expressed and considered as freely as possible. For example, the programme encourages the provision of childcare services so that women can attend FFS sessions and there is attention to aspects such as the timing of meetings or the accessibility and safety of meeting venues. Quotas have also been established in the governing structures of FFS, while positions such as president or secretary have been made rotational to avoid an additional burden deterring women from taking up these positions of responsibility. In countries like China, over 50% of the management teams are made up of women and special attention is paid to elderly women, given their key role in agriculture.

Figure 19: SD=HS programme's outreach (source: Oxfam report)

Country	Women	Men
China	300	200
Guatemala	415	443
Nepal	5855	2756
Laos	25514	17629
Peru	444	487
Uganda	2435	1999
Zambia	1267	431
Zimbabwe	7695	4844

The available MEAL Outcome Overview document does not provide a comprehensive picture of women's participation since there are information gaps related to relevant indicators and not all are sex disaggregated.

Nonetheless, the following disaggregated figures have been extracted from Annual Reports for 2020 (see figure 19).

These figures suggest that there is a high level of participation of women in the programme (over 50% of total participants in 6 of the 8 countries) with two exceptions where the figures are slightly below 50% (Guatemala and Peru). However, if we consider the participation of women in key positions (such as master trainers in the programme), only three countries (China, Uganda and Zimbabwe) have 50% women master trainers or more (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: Percentage of women master trainers (source: Oxfam report)

Beyond numbers of participants in the FFS, the programme has also successfully used strategic opportunities to make women's role visible in international venues by involving them in conferences and panels. Gender balance has been achieved at most events organised to date, even if certain meetings reflect the male domination of the sector (as illustrated by the SD=HS Inception Workshop held in May 2019, attended by 11 women and 29 men, and including only 2 women in representation of 8 target countries).

Another positive aspect to highlight is the adequate portrayal of women in the information, education and communications (IEC) materials produced within the framework of the programme, which show women as leaders or reporters in positions of influence or power. There have also been promising developments in the methodological realm with the piloting of a Gender Journey module based on Oxfam's GALS methodology. The introduction of GALS in the programme encountered difficulties during its piloting in Laos and was abandoned, since it involved incorporating an additional methodology and 6-month process into an already demanding FFS schedule

of training sessions. In light of these difficulties, an alternative tool was developed by programme staff (the Gender Journey Module for FFS) with a view to offering a shorter and better adapted methodology that could more easily be integrated into ongoing work under Pillars 1 and 3. Although it is in its initial stages and its application remains optional, it constitutes a valuable resource for continuing to strengthen women's participation in the future.

The need for further gender analysis

Despite the comprehensive programme's gender approach and positive results described above, it is widely acknowledged that the programme has missed important opportunities to conduct certain gender analyses that have significant potential for contributing to improving the lives of women smallholder farmers and to examining the emerging positive signs that are already happening in terms of women's empowerment (including unexpected results such as spin-off savings and self-help groups or collective cooking initiatives in COVID times).

Additional gender analysis would also help to shed light on emerging issues that illustrate the complexity of addressing gender equality in multiple contexts (such as the feminisation of agriculture or the return of men who were working abroad due to the pandemic), which can influence the outcomes of the programme.

There are also several issues related to women's participation in the programme that require further enquiry. As mentioned above, FFS are making remarkable efforts to engage women but there is insufficient analysis on this positive dimension of their approach, which limits opportunities to learn and share these experiences. For example, in Uganda, it was noted that FFS were effectively providing a platform for leadership that had led some women to get elected for public office.

In the work on FSEs, there seems to be less participation of women (e.g., only 8 out of 66 producers in Guatemala), which is partly due to land issues that are not being problematised by the programme. In the case of Zimbabwe, although 60% of growers are women, it was noted that men are sometimes the real decision makers behind the woman who signs on. Furthermore, consulted stakeholders acknowledged that issues linked to the double burden of women's participation in the demanding activities of FSEs were not being considered.

Under Pillar 3, women's participation is motivated by tactical needs that are related to their traditional role in the family as carers and cooks, but local food plants are considered secondary to key crops that are dominated and controlled by men. The fact that this component of the programme engages women through their domestic role in nutrition, raises questions about how to empower them in a way that challenges traditional gender roles on this theme. This said, it also needs to be noted that the approach in Pillar 3 also focuses on revaluing spaces that are traditionally considered women's spaces such as homes. Through this approach these spaces inhabited by women emerge with an added value for the communities, which endows Pillar 3 with an empowering angle for women even without challenging traditional gender roles. Additionally, there have also been cases where partners such as FOVIDA in Peru[23] have used Pillar 3 to organise gender-transformative initiatives.

Under Pillar 4, there is a wide acknowledgement of the opportunities that have been successfully seized by the programme to showcase women's role in agriculture at different advocacy events in a sector that "has a male face". However, it is equally recognised that not enough gender-sensitive research has been conducted under this pillar, despite its relevance for advocacy and policy work (such as registration issues in Laos).

[23] FOVIDA in Peru trained a group of local facilitators from 15 communities on masculinities, to strengthen commitments in the redistribution of gender roles in the communities.

A gender analysis would also allow stakeholders to improve their understanding of time-poverty (see section 3.1.) and bring to the discussion the invisibility of women's unpaid work. ParEvo provided interesting insights through the stories of two fictional female characters (Sunita and Beritha):

> "*Sunita Chaudhary and her husband are freed bonded labour living in government donated land and house in the rural part of Nepal. They both tried farming and always bear the loss as they do not have farming experience. Husband goes to India for unskilled labour and land remains fallow. Sunita remains at home doing nothing and waiting for her remittance*" (Sunita, ParEvo)

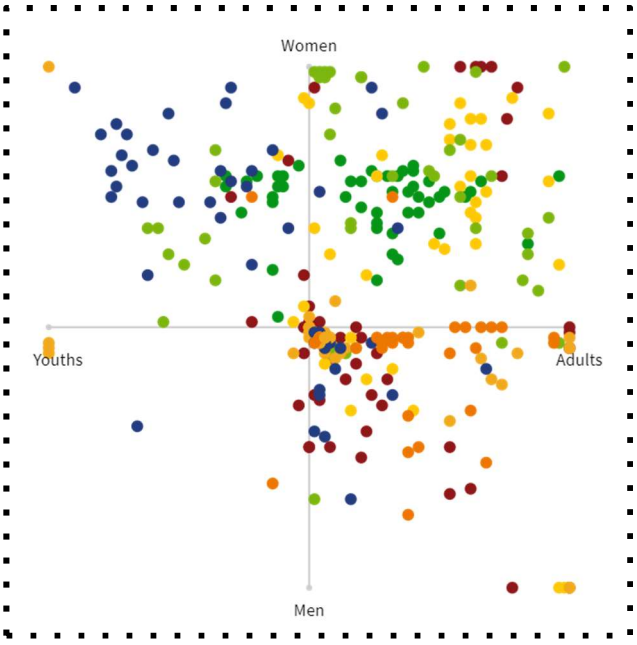
> "*We would always conduct our FFS weekly meetings on Sunday, but that didn't change my routine. I still had to wake up early, do house chores, breastfeed and shortly hit the road, walking the stretch of four miles to this mango tree, and often arriving just in time to start the meeting at noon*" (Beritha, ParEvo)

The participation of youth remains a challenge

Increasing the participation of youth in the activities of the SD=HS programme remains a challenge that was identified in Phase 1. Overall, youth participation has been limited, with uneven results across countries and activities. There is consensus among stakeholders that the notion of youth engagement and what is expected from their participation is not clearly defined in the programme. Several consulted stakeholders pointed to the need for a distinctive separate approach.

Youth participation requires an offer that is relevant to their needs and attractive enough to stop them from leaving rural areas. A gender analysis should be applied since the expectations and opportunities available to young men and women are different (see figure 21). Young men have high expectations when they start collaborating with the programme but then they leave because they are more interested (and have other opportunities) in other sectors, while young women are more limited in their choices. As one of the partners noted, "*youth want quick results, they have no patience to see seeds grow. We need a better approach for them*".

Figure 21: Stories per gender and age (source: Sprockler)



Youth-led FFS are being developed and intergenerational approaches are also being used to counter these difficulties, but challenges remain. CTDT Zambia has been motivating youth through theatre and sports, apart from promoting leadership positions for youth who have the advantage of better literacy levels. Some are helping to manage accounts and records in FFS, while in China, partners have intensified youth-targeted activities to maximise opportunities for engagement during the return of youth to rural areas in the summer. However, there are no specific tools available to support work with youth (although Zimbabwe is currently working on the development of a specific youth curriculum).

Participation of indigenous peoples:

The SD=HS programme does not provide disaggregated data on the participation of indigenous peoples. However, given the high numbers of indigenous peoples working in agriculture in some of the countries targeted by the programme, positive results

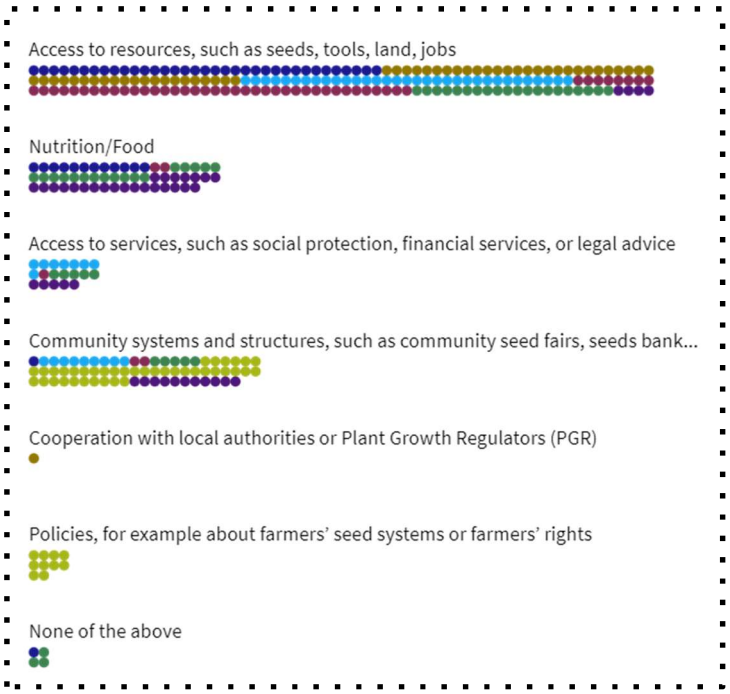
have emerged during the course of this MTR. In fact, the majority of stories of change collected by Sprockler in Guatemala and Peru were shared by storytellers who described themselves as indigenous peoples (82/96 respondents).

CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGES - What has been actually achieved and how? Building a mature understanding of how change is happening as a result of the program´ contribution, including an analysis of unexpected changes.

During this MTR, the use of Sprockler has allowed us to capture a total of 342 stories of change related to the participation of smallholder farmers (men, women and young people) in the SD=HS programme. The themes of these stories resonate with the contributions shared during interviews and focus group discussions with the evaluation team.

Two common characteristics of the stories of change are worth highlighting since they illustrate core features of the programme. The first is the fact that almost all the stories describe changes at the community rather than at the individual level. Furthermore, the stories categorised by storytellers as related to individual changes are in fact also linked to collective changes affecting the community. The second common feature is the central role played by knowledge and learning in the majority of the stories, since the stories are ultimately about changes in practices that resulted from what smallholder farmers learned (i.e., what they are doing differently as a result of this acquired knowledge).

Figure 22: The change in my story is mostly about… (source: Sprockler)



The different categories of change are summarised in the graphics below. In terms of geographic distribution, Laos and Peru focused on access to resources, while stories from Guatemala, Uganda and Zimbabwe (where Pillar 3 activities are being developed) also described changes related to nutrition and food. Nepal, Uganda and Zimbabwe also shared stories related to access to services and community systems, while Zambia was the only country to report on changes related to community systems and policies (although in fact, they do not mention policies at all) (see Figure 22).

5.1. Extent to which the programme is contributing to relevant positive changes in the lives of smallholder farmers (men and women, young people).

5.1.1 Capacities: skills, knowledge, innovation, capacity to produce locally adapted seeds, etc.

The SD=HS programme is contributing to building the capacities of smallholder farmers in different ways. Almost all the stories of change mentioned in Sprockler contain an element of training or mention something that smallholder farmers have learned, mainly in relation to farming techniques.

Many relevant examples were shared during the MTR. Stakeholders mentioned at least two cases of women being elected to public office partly because of the knowledge and skills gained through their participation in the programme. Another shared

example was the exchange of FFS experiences and knowledge between Zimbabwe and Uganda through a trip that served to transfer knowledge generated within the programme.

In Zimbabwe, Champion Seeds has been setting up demonstration plots for marketing purposes that are helping to educate farmers on the performance of their varieties. These efforts are leading to a greater awareness of the value of local knowledge, also through interactions between farmers and researchers. SHF are also learning to distinguish whether a farm is for food or for market and this knowledge is allowing some of them to move on from being farmers to being facilitators.

In Nepal, women's stories of change mentioned the value of the new machinery and of learning how to use it for better results. Comments about increased self-confidence were also shared:

> *"I think my major learning is that I can speak in a larger forum. Before joining the FFS I feel shy, but nowadays my confidence level has been increased by doing weekly practice in FFS".*

Under Pillar 1, PPB work is providing the following benefits: i) it is improving seeds, ii) improving varieties, iii) creating new varieties, iv) evaluating new varieties and advanced lines (including ones that are improved) before adoption. Stakeholders also noted that improved varieties of seeds led to increased productivity and to a better quality of life, while under Pillar 2, marketing training was highlighted as a key contribution that was allowing SHFs to sell "climate-resilient seeds", thereby generating income for their families.

Under Pillar 3, the new knowledge noted was linked to improved diets and a better understanding of nutrients. Under Pillar 4, examples were shared of how invitations to international venues were empowering participants and improving their self-esteem through social recognition.

The references to individual capacity-building shared through ParEvo are also worth noting, since they do not only cover technical aspects but also relate to leadership and social empowerment:

> *"Peter sees himself as a new champion of PPB who can influence relevant people"* (ParEvo).
>
> *"Sunita, who was barely able to introduce herself is now giving a speech in the general assembly of the cooperative as a chairperson"* (ParEvo).
>
> *"Achieving the FFS objectives proved my most challenging but also most fulfilling vocation as a farmer, facilitator and community change agent in several ways, and left a big lesson for the future"* (ParEvo).

A member of Oxfam staff has also described a steep learning curve that has opened possible career opportunities in the field of plant breeding.

5.1.2. Access to resources: food, seeds, income, jobs, land, tools, etc.

Almost all the stories of change in Sprockler focus on access to resources and food (except Zambia), including advanced lines, commercial seeds and increased income (mainly in Guatemala, Laos and Peru). The fact that all the stories about nutrition and food were shared by smallholder farmers working on Pillar 3 could suggest a certain bias on how stories are told. It seems likely that results under Pillar 1 may also be having an impact on nutrition, but this is not reported.

Interviews and FGDs confirmed the programme's contributions in terms of:

a) Access to seeds:

> "*Farmers don't have to travel long distances to look for seeds anymore*" (Zimbabwe)

"*Through FFS we are able to obtain pure lines to develop varieties for release*" (Uganda)

b) Access to equipment:

"*We have received weights, boxes and tools*" (Guatemala)

c) Increased income:

"*Revenue is 15% more than last year, we can say there's economic empowerment*" (Nepal).

The stories shared through ParEvo also point to relevant contributions:

"*Sunita and her husband are generating very good revenues from seed sales*".

"*Members are presently struggling with conflicting priorities between FFS activities and quick fixes to obtain healthy food. To align these, I plan exchange visits with neighboring FFSs dealing with NUS crops*".

5.1.3. Access to services and community structures: social protection, financial services, legal advice, etc.

Several stories were collected through Sprockler, notably from Nepal and Uganda, which described contributions to changes that are related to services and community structures that are closely related to the activities implemented under the SD=HS programme (such as access to plots of lands or community seed banks).

However, few contributions related to wider public services and community structures (such as social protection, financial services and legal advice) were noted, which suggests that this broader dimension may not lie within the scope of the SD=HS programme.

5.1.4. Behaviours and practices

All the change stories recorded through Sprockler are about how smallholder farmers applied their newly acquired knowledge in practice. Some respondents prioritised what they had changed because of what they had learned, while others prioritised what they did differently with the new resources they had obtained through the programme. In fact, the stories about food mentioned under 5.1.2 are also about changes in practices (how family health improved because of new varied diets).

Stories about changes in practices are not predominantly about seeds but more generally about new agricultural practices and learning (farming and growing techniques needed to breed) which illustrates the importance of agricultural extension and the value of the actionable knowledge provided by the programme.

Other related contributions to changes shared through interviews and FGDs focus on changes in attitudes towards seed management and how farmers are beginning to give more value to the seeds they grow themselves.

5.1.5. Nutrition and quality of life

The stories of change that fall under this category mainly focus on the contribution of the intervention at household level (such as, for example, being healthier thanks to a more varied diet). More women than men have told change stories on nutrition-related aspects, which reflects the role women play in securing food for the family but also point to the risk of perpetuating gender roles.

"*I am a single mother; I have two young children. In the year 2019 I started to participate in an FFS where we planted four varieties of beans to identify the one with the highest yield, in 2020 I got a little seed of the Hunapu variety; this material was one of the best results presented in the test plot. Before, I did not sow shrub beans. After the test we did in the FFS they supported me with a little seed, and I planted it. I liked it for its good taste and because it is cooked in three hours. In my family we only have a*

> *small plot of land where we plant vegetables. I have included the bean seed with the idea of harvesting at least a few pounds and having something to eat. I will continue to keep my seed so as not to lose this variety, as it is a good bean. I appreciate the support they have given us in the project, because by participating in the group I have started to plant shrub bean, I also have knowledge of how to take care of the bean, at what distances it should be planted, how to fertilize it and what products we must apply when the bean is sick*" (Guatemala, Housewife, 36-50).

Interviews and FGDs confirmed the value of NUS for improving nutrition and "*potentially playing a good role in food security when available*" (Nepal), while one of the ParEvo entries noted that:

> "*COVID-19 has demonstrated how health systems link to food systems. I anticipate several benefits for the community if we prioritise agro-diversity and adapt our breeding interventions to strengthen the resilience needed to cope with the aftermath of COVID-19*" (ParEvo).

Evidence suggests that the promotion of NUS and local species produces good results under favourable agro-ecological conditions (Guatemala, Laos), but when SHFs are confronted with more extreme food security situations (as in Zimbabwe's Zone V), NUS fail to provide the necessary food security[24] . Furthermore, there is no scientific data to demonstrate that NUS have led to substantial improvements in nutrition through this programme.

5.2. Extent to which the project is contributing to relevant positive changes in entire communities and/or in relevant groups (indigenous, youth, women).

5.2.1. Community systems and structures

Although community seed banks (CSBs) were not included in the 342 collected stories of change, their contribution to food security was mentioned in several interviews. CSBs constitute an important part of the work carried out by CTDT in Zimbabwe, where it has set up 22 CSBs across the country. These banks have been licensed so that they can sell their seeds to the communities and SHFs can easily access them as required.

In countries like Guatemala, stakeholders noted that the marketing module has helped to sell produce, while the intervention has also supported the development of infrastructure. The strong chain of CSBs created prior to SD=HS has also facilitated and supported FFS activities in the communities involved.

In Nepal, many of the farmers who have joined FFS are also associated with the local cooperative and are contributing to farmer seed enterprises. These men and women who used to produce grain are now producing seeds, which yield 15% more. This collaboration was crucial during the COVID-19 crisis, when most of the farmers consumed the safe seeds of rice when there was nothing else available.

5.2.2. Autonomy/collective capacities

Several stories related to the issue of autonomy/collective capacities were shared in Sprockler, including examples of farmers becoming trainers, politically active or representing the community at different venues (as mentioned under 5.1.).

Consulted stakeholders praised existing dialogue between farmers who had become community leaders and scientists, as evidenced at various venues, and appreciated how this acquired capacity was helping to upscale results through other programmes funded by partners such as FAO.

[24] 10 out of 47 NUS FFS succeeded on their production objectives, 10 out of 47 reverted to pillar 1 activities because NUS plots didn't perform *during the 18/19 season (drought).*

5.2.3. Networks and alliances

Although only one story of change collected through Sprockler focused on networks and alliances, evidence from interviews and FGDs suggests that they constitute one of the key strengths of the SD=HS programme.

For example, in Guatemala, the alliance created between three different cooperatives has been crucial for effective marketing and collective bargaining. In Zimbabwe, Champion Seeds works with associations of growers who are members in the 5 districts of operation and the association chairs sit on the CS Advisory board to help direct the company's strategy. At the same time, CS is also working closely with Super Seeds, a farmers' enterprise that was born out of a project funded by the Swiss Agency for Development Corporation (SDC). Although there is no formal agreement, they collaborate by buying and selling seeds from each other.

Other examples of alliances include MoUs with various academic institutions (such as NARC in Nepal) and collaboration with donors (such as FAO in Uganda) or initiatives such as the East African Farmers' School Hub (see Relevance and Coherence for more examples). There is also evidence of the importance of personal networks and relations for the overall success of the intervention. This was also reflected in one of the ParEvo stories:

> "*He starts connecting to former student friends now working in the Government*" (ParEvo).

5.2.4. Policy environment for farmers' seed systems and farmers' rights (at local, regional, national and international level)

Several examples of contributions to the policy environment emerged during the MTR, even if it is difficult to measure certain intangible aspects linked to policy-influencing, ideological shifts, influencing narratives, keeping issues on the agenda, etc.

Policy landscaping studies on the impact of seed laws on farmers have been conducted under Pillar 4, and pilots are being developed for registration of farmer varieties in Laos, Nepal and Zimbabwe. In Uganda, there have also been important steps towards the registration of farmer varieties, as well as workshops and awareness-raising sessions supporting changes to the National Seed Policy. Extensive dialogues with the authorities have been held in Zimbabwe on the Seed Act (which in its present form does not make provisions for the participation of traditional seed varieties in the seed industry). A draft National Strategy and Action Plan for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture has been developed and is expected to be approved in 2021.

There is evidence to suggest that the SD=HS programme offers a valuable middle-ground where spaces for the discussion of national policy issues can be created. However, there is little evidence of SHFs recognising their position as rights holders that can demand duty bearers their rights as farmers.

Under Pillar 4, the SD=HS programme in Laos has worked with the objective of legalizing what farmers do and has played an important role in the drafting of the decree from the first phase and up to the second phase through consultations from the national to the local level. Oxfam's facilitation of the discussions and the spaces it created for farmer groups and government to exchange have been key for the drafting and approval of the seed decree. The programme has been involved from the beginning until approval and is now supporting implementation through the seed forum which is disseminating the decree across the country.

5.2.5. International community level

In the international arena, Oxfam Novib plays a unique convening role and is considered a respected interlocutor by different actors in the sector (environmentalists, private sector companies, international organisations, CGIAR,

etc.). The reflection spaces that Oxfam promotes are highly appreciated, since they provide a door to actors that are less like-minded (such as UPOV or commercial companies) and have succeeded in sitting these diverse actors round the table (including seed companies from the Netherlands).

The SD=HS programme has also influenced changes in Oxfam at the international level, since it has inspired other initiatives and provided valuable stories from the field that have informed campaigns and strategy documents (such as the paper for CLARA on land use in 2019 or the critique of the CGIAR White Paper in 2021). Stakeholders acknowledge that the contributions from the field have been instrumental for advancing Oxfam's global agenda, even if the approach has sometimes seemed extractive and/or tokenistic.

There is widespread consensus in the sector that Oxfam Novib is helping to "*keep seeds on the agenda and keep the topic alive*". Sector stakeholders value the fact that Oxfam has a counter narrative that is trying to challenge the mainstream narrative pushed by the commercial sector by placing smallholder farmers at the centre to demand that their rights are guaranteed. SD=HS provides smallholder farmers with opportunities to present their knowledge and expertise in front of the scientific/academic community.

The programme's balance between scientific knowledge and Oxfam's credibility and standing in the sector also make Oxfam a strong player on key themes related to agriculture and biodiversity. An example of Oxfam's influence shared during this MTR was the latest IPCC Climate Report, where partly thanks to advocacy by SD=HS programme staff and other Oxfam teams across the Oxfam Confederation, the words "agroecology" and "farmer seed systems" found their place in the document. There is also the perception among several consulted stakeholders that the SD=HS programme is helping to change the perspective that "work on seeds is gender blind" and although the sector remains male dominated, the strategic participation of women in the programme and their interventions at certain events are helping to make inroads to challenge this alleged gender neutrality.

5.3. Is it possible to point towards broader impact?

At the current stage of implementation, it seems difficult to point towards a broader impact of the SD=HS programme. However, evidence collected during this MTR suggests that any broader impact that might be expected will be linked to changes in policy that can affect key sector themes (as described in section 5.2 at the national and international community levels). For example, the possible futures of the programme discussed during the ParEvo exercise point to new opportunities related to the new climate change agenda and a more enabling environment with space for continuing to influence policy.

It has also been noted that as a result of COVID-19, food security issues are receiving more attention, since local knowledge and short value chains have gained weight, while the idea that improved crop diversity leads to improved food security and nutrition has now become widely accepted.

SUSTAINABILITY - Will the benefit last? Identifying aspects of SD=HS that are likely to be sustained after their completion, including an analysis of the factors for sustainability.

The sustainability of SD=HS has been analysed from two perspectives. Firstly, in terms of the sustainability of the process, i.e., the extent to which different stakeholders have the commitment and capacity to continue insisting on demonstrating the viability of the ToC. Secondly, the sustainability of the results that the programme has achieved to date, including the use and uptake of the products developed under SD=HS, once the programme has been completed.

It is a long-term commitment

As mentioned in several places in this report, there is broad consensus that the ToC posed by SD=HS is a long-term one. Hence, after nearly three years of programme activity (mostly under the effects of the pandemic) the various components are far from sustainable even in the case of countries where the programme was active during the first phase[25], possibly with the exception of Laos.

As the box below illustrates, the time it would take to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Pillar 1 approach alone would be approximately 9 years. Demonstrating its sustainability (understood as obtaining funding to sustain it over time beyond Oxfam's contribution) would take even longer.

It takes around 9 years to develop and register a variety to be sold commercially

Before the genomic advances were made available in the last decade, the time needed to develop and release new varieties was considered to be between seven and ten years. In the Netherlands, for example, a new tomato variety **needed nine years**. Nowadays, with biomarkers, CRISP and the multi-omics approaches[26], this time can be four and a half years[27].

In FFS environments, for a variety to be adaptable to farmers' needs, it must be tested on their plots. With government collaboration and parallel testing in farmers' plots, varieties can be developed in six years. If it is tested on farmers' plots *after* the on-station tests have been completed, **this adds three years to the six years**[28]. Hence, parallel testing is necessary.

The idea is that, as these new techniques take hold, farmers continue to be engaged at critical stages of the breeding cycle: objective setting, selection of populations, evaluation, seed dissemination. These stages are as relevant in future advanced breeding efforts as they are in more traditional crop breeding efforts; methods can be adapted when this future arrives.

This analysis is consistent with time frames provided by consulted stakeholders, which imply that only long-term funding commitments of more than ten/twelve years (which is unusual for development cooperation timeframes), could ensure that the seeds produced have all the guarantees that the complexity of the process demands.

6.1 To what extent are the right conditions in place for Oxfam and partners to sustain (and potentially scale) the changes to which the programme has contributed?

Since it is a long-term process, the sustainability of SD=HS would depend on the commitment and the capacity of the different stakeholders to maintain their involvement over time.

For Oxfam

As mentioned under the Relevance chapter, the MTR obtained mixed indications on whether Oxfam Novib would commit to maintaining its engagement to SD=HS in the long term. Some of the internal stakeholders consulted felt that given the long tradition of Oxfam Novib in the seed sector, the restructuring could only be an opportunity to link up with other teams and to innovate by exploring connections with other food security topics and even exploring alternative ways of engaging farmers that can be "*less structured, looser and less costly*".

[25] Laos, Peru and Zimbabwe
[26] Muthamilarasan et al, 2019
[27] In 2021, family-owned companies in the Netherlands, such as Enza Zaden, have the capacity to develop varieties in five years.
[28] Mustafa et al, 2005

Others felt that a programme like SD=HS no longer fitted into Oxfam Novib's strategic direction and that the only possibility for long-term survival would be to re-position it as a climate adaptation programme.

The MTR also documented Oxfam-wide policy changes that could affect Oxfam Novib in the future. It was suggested that One Oxfam's "70/30" shift (mentioned under 1.4.) would mean a sharp decrease in technical staff at headquarters and an equivalent increase in the countries (given the present budget allocation for HR, see Figure 14). This process could make it difficult to sustain the current approach, depending on the priority and technical capacity of the different Oxfam Country Offices which varies considerably (as mentioned under Efficiency).

For implementing partners and Oxfam Country Offices

The selection of implementing partners has been identified as one of the most important factors in the sustainability of the SD=HS approach.

Given that the project's objectives are so firmly aligned with partners' strategic approaches and that they all have extensive backgrounds in the seed and farmers' rights sector, it is safe to assume that they will continue their engagement with the aims of SD=HS beyond Oxfam's funding.

In addition, the partners consulted have expressed the wish to continue with the approaches proposed by the project, such as FFS. In fact, in countries such as Uganda and Zimbabwe, the partner has involved donors such as FAO to scale up this approach.

Not only have implementing partners expressed their will to fundraise to keep the FFSs going, some Oxfam COs have also shared a similar commitment.

However, this cannot be guaranteed in all cases. Even if they all remain committed to the overall objective of the intervention (i.e., "*indigenous peoples and SHF enjoy their Farmers' Rights and have the capacity to access, develop and use plant genetic resources to improve their food and nutrition security under conditions of climate change*"), they may not be able to maintain some of their approaches depending on whether or not these strategies are adapted to future donors.

It is important to emphasise that implementing partners and experts have stressed that the survival of the SD=HS approach will not depend on the technical capacity of the partners, which is already considered to be very high.

For Governments

Institutionalisation - the buzz word

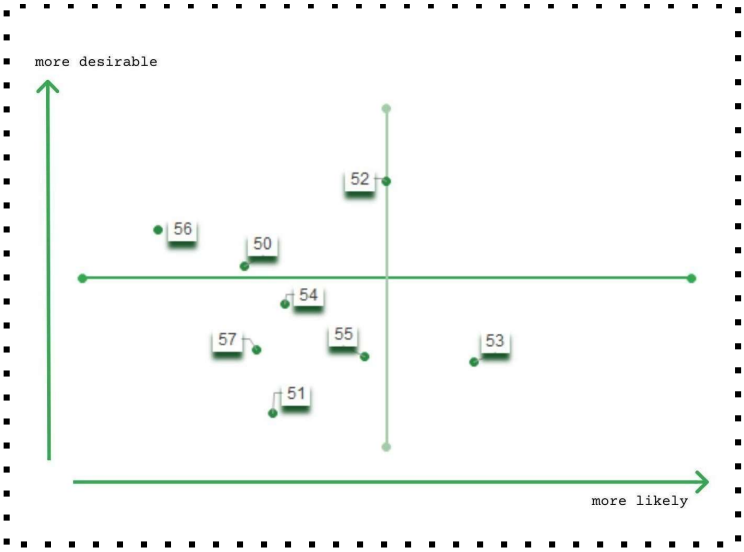
Oxfam is fully aware of this and has included the concept of *institutionalisation* in the programme's narrative to indicate the need for other actors (primarily national government entities) to take the lead.

This institutionalisation process does not yet have a clear strategy (i.e., its goals and limits) in most of the countries, with the exception of Laos (see "role of the government" in this section.

For example, for the teams working on Pillar 1, institutionalisation has to do exclusively with the relationship with NARS and the capacity and commitment of NARS to support/incorporate the FFSs[29]. However, it was not clear to all stakeholders whether this was a realistic objective. Many have voiced that farmers and their associations cannot be asked to pay for PPB in the future, nor can governments because of their budgetary constraints. Hence, the presence of international donors

[29] For instance, the Guatemala Report mentions that "Good coordination has been established with the MAGA and SESAN Extension Agencies in the municipalities, however, the responsibility to manage 100% of FFS has not yet been assumed". Is this really expected?

Figure 23: Most like and most desirable stories (Source: ParEvo)



(and/or the private sector) is a must, as consulted experts acknowledge. For example, the three stories voted as most realistic in ParEvo (55, 52 and 53, see Figure 23) speak of the importance of NARS in the sustainability of the PPB but also of donors.

"*It is critical to institutionalize PPB work in National Agriculture Research, CGIARs and universities. The program needs support from donors*" (Story 52, ParEvo, voted as the second more likely and the most desirable)

For Pillar 2, there are still key questions for which there are no shared answers. For example, is the objective for cooperatives to be able to institutionalise/subsidise PPB seeds? Or is the involvement of the mainstream commercial sector intended? And if so, to what extent?

The role of the government

Oxfam Novib is working hard to promote institutionalisation (particularly of FFSs) by ensuring that their framework and methodologies can be adapted to international and national research centres of excellence.

Despite identified challenges like the lack of a clear institutionalisation strategy or the potential political volatility that may be encountered when governments change, the MTR has found very positive signs (even at this stage of implementation) that FFSs in particular are being integrated into governmental entities in some countries.

Governments seem very willing to facilitate biodiversity enhancement by providing varieties for testing, in some cases by signing MoUs, which can be seen as formalising "institutionalisation" by agreeing who does what, and who pays for it. Ideally, these agreements would be four-way: governments, POs, private sector (including FSEs) and CGIAR institutions.

The clearest case is that of Laos, where the implementing partner is NAFRI (Laos NARS), and the project is therefore fully integrated into the country's institutional framework. In this country, PPB is embedded in the national breeding program, and collaboration among stakeholders, including SD=HS, led to two new varieties[30] based on traditional varieties, but with double yield, that are now distributed in 5 of the biggest rice producing provinces.

> "*The project and NAFRI are the same because now we do the seed collection, the breeding, distribute to the farmers, share the methodology, share varieties to the farmers, etc.* (...)" (Laos official).

In addition, there are also signs of institutionalisation of FFSs in Nepal, where they already have 7 government-run FFSs. The implementing partner has an MoU with NARC but not the Oxfam CO, which raises interesting questions about the best approach for sustainability.

In Zambia and Zimbabwe, government departments are paying the salaries of extension workers and breeders working with the FFS and in some places, providing basic

[30] TK17 and SLV1

infrastructure. Other positive signs in these countries include the engagement of nutritionists under Pillar 3. In fact, the role of government nutritionists and especially extension workers have been identified as key factors for achieving institutionalisation.

For example, in countries like Zambia and Zimbabwe, FFSs work very closely with extension workers who see the benefit of using FFS as an extended approach. They share information with the FFS, have access to materials provided by the SD=HS programme and see their engagement as an opportunity for learning and advancing their careers.

While extension workers and nutritionists have been identified as key figures for liaising with the government, facilitators and especially master facilitators are the face of the FFSs, i.e., the people who represent and speak on behalf of SD=HS with the local institutions. However, it has emerged that this representation function is not sufficiently recognised and promoted by the programme.

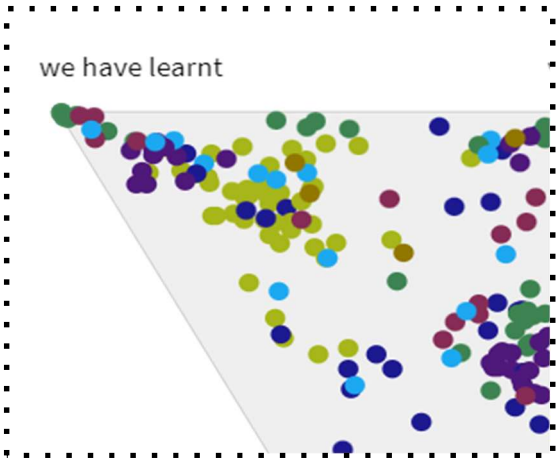
6.2 To what extent will the outputs of the programme be used beyond the life of SD=HS?

Capacity building and knowledge products

Results related to the acquisition of knowledge and skills are the most permanent and this component is very present in the stories shared on Sprockler in most countries (see chapter 5 on Contributions to Changes).

> "*The SD=HS project has changed my mindset towards agriculture and in particular seed. From the FFS, and several trainings I underwent as a facilitator, I came to know and appreciate the importance of seed if I am to remain seed secure. The first thing about seeds that I learnt from the FFS was how to select the best seed for planting, based on my interest traits, and then how to save seed properly to avoid damage. I have since been saving, securing and owning good seed*" (Uganda, Farmer, Man, 16-35)

Figure 24: Stories about learning (source: Sprockler)



Knowledge products developed under SD=HS will still be available after the end of the programme, and it is safe to assume that they will be used both by Oxfam and by implementing partners beyond 2022. However, the MTR found indications that the strategies and monitoring for the use and uptake of knowledge and innovation could be improved (see section 7.2.).

Farmer Field Schools

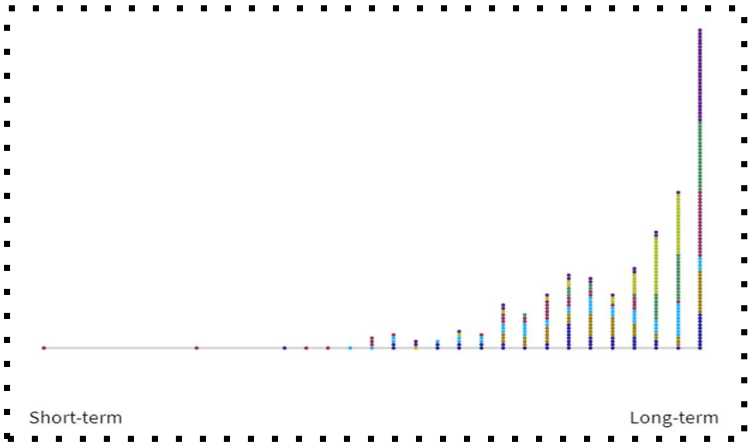
As already mentioned in different parts of the report, the continuity of the FFS after the end of the project is not guaranteed and depends on several factors, such as the commitment and capacity of the implementing partners and their potential donors to sustain the approach.

Ultimately, its sustainability will depend on the level of institutionalisation discussed above and on the level of ownership felt by the community.

In this sense, it is noteworthy that the high relevance of the project as perceived by the communities (including facilitators) makes their level of ownership very high (see Figure 4).

When FFS participants were asked about their continuity as a group during the end of season evaluation, 75% expressed their interest in continuing, which also points to a strong feeling of ownership.

Figure 25: The change in my story is likely to be... (source: Sprockler)



The MTR has also been able to identify examples of farmer-led initiatives that indicate strong ownership of the programme. For example, in Zimbabwe, there is an Annual Seed Festival organised by farmers in which the implementing partner is now only a guest after organising it in the past.

According to the stories shared in Sprockler, communities believe that the changes brought about by the programme will be long-lasting (see Figure 25).

Farmer Seed Enterprises (FSEs)

During the MTR, discussions on the sustainability of FSEs revealed a wide spectrum of views that range from optimistic perspectives on their future to more pessimistic appraisals that point to market forces as having the ultimate power to determine their future.

FSEs have a social part and a commercial part. Distinguishing between them is key for calculating their sustainability. Consulted staff have noted that separating the social from the commercial part of the FSE accounts was not an option at the beginning, because they were very intertwined, but in the last year it has become possible (and easier in the case of Guatemala than in Zimbabwe). In Guatemala, one of the aspects that emerged was the limited commercial understanding of market-related aspects of cooperatives, while in Zimbabwe, the fact that Champion Seeds is still not fully financially independent from the programme raised questions.

One of the social components in FSEs has to do with Pillar 1, which according to the ToC, would play a kind of "R&D" role for Pillar 2. According to this logic, institutionalisation would require governments to contribute to the development of new seeds through the NARS, but this cannot be included on a company's balance sheet without producing permanent losses.

The other institutionalisation role for governments under Pillar 2 could be to offer support through to business development through agricultural extension services, which is the weakest part (and not the seed production part, because the seed certification agencies have been involved in the programme from the beginning).

The key factor determining the duration of support to cooperatives is their degree of maturity. It is not possible to apply "one size fits all". In the case of Guatemala, the cooperatives had already been operating for many years before offering a new service (increasing seed diversity), which can contribute to their sustainability. In the case of Zimbabwe, they started from scratch, when the partners set up the cooperative, and in that case five years is insufficient to achieve a functioning structure.

Producing seed for SHF (mainly small grains) is more expensive and riskier for climate reasons than producing commercial seed by relying on the production of medium-sized farmers, many of them with irrigation. In the case of Zimbabwe, a combination of 85% commercial seed was achieved in order to cover the losses that the small-grain sector was producing. The result was successful in saving the losses, but it was not what was originally envisaged. The programme has looked for insurance, which seems possible in Nepal but too expensive in Zimbabwe. Small grains will continue to be a risky business.

In 2020 the results have changed completely, with maize accounting for only 2% of sales, against 80% for small grains. We have not obtained information on the reasons for this change, so it is difficult to draw conclusions. However, it is a fact that small grains will continue to suffer from climate risk more than maize.

Finally, in Nepal, work under Pillar 2 is promising but the preparation and community consultation meetings were only launched in July-August 2021. Since relationships with seed cooperatives have just started, there are no tangible results to report yet.

Policy gains

As mentioned under the description of the ToC, an enabling policy environment is a key element of the logic behind SD=HS. With regards to the sustainability of programme results, appropriate legislation and administrative measures (such as MoUs and budgetary allocations) are considered as a prerequisite for any scaling up of the programme.

However, the MTR finds that all policy gains at the country level and at the international level are potentially reversible as they are exposed to political volatility. This danger of policy reversal is lower (though not non-existent) in cases such as Laos where the Seed Decree has already been formally adopted; and higher in cases such as Zimbabwe where the law being advocated for has not yet been formally adopted, despite having gained ground in setting up narratives, discourses, partnerships, and drafts.

It is important to note that, according to sector experts inside and outside Oxfam, this danger is also present on the global scene, where a change of government in a major power can set back political gains by decades.

Hence, even if the progress that has been made in policy practices (i.e., in the level of institutionalisation of FFS, in the signing of formal Memoranda of Understanding between Oxfam and/or its partners and government entities) is considered more stable, it is still subject to political volatility, especially in those contexts where political swings determine the work of civil servants.

Finally, as in the rest of the pillars, there is broad consensus that despite the positive results achieved, much remains to be done and more pressure needs to be exerted to challenge and alter national and international policy narratives in a sustainable manner.

6.3. To what extent is the programme considering and/or integrating relevant sector innovations (including technological) in the field of seed production? Any synergies to note?

The views on what constitutes an innovation varies greatly across SD=HS. Certain consulted stakeholders described providing bicycles and smartphones for facilitators as innovative elements that would be welcome, while others talked about how the programme could be a knowledge management hub for multi-omics genetic work globally.

Besides this disparity in the expectations of different stakeholders, the MTR has documented several types of innovations that SD=HS has developed.

There have been conceptual innovations, such as linking PPB with nutrition and biodiversity in manuals and other tools, which are issues that, according to experts, had not been addressed together before. For example, it is important how nutrition work has been embedded in the FFS methodology.

Other technical innovations have been related to genetics under Pillar 1, as varieties are passed on to the communities. Finally, there have been innovations through technological tools like the frequently mentioned diversity wheel, the use of KOBO for MEAL purposes or on-line training modules. Particularly noteworthy are the innovations introduced in response to COVID-19, such as the reinvention of training practices and the introduction of the global WhatsApp group to strengthen communication.

However, several bottlenecks in terms of the allocation and administration of funds have also been reported, which suggest that the programme has not always been able to properly roll out these types of innovations (e.g., facilitators purchasing smartphones). It was also noted that there is little freedom and limited resources to engage staff to work on innovations, because they are usually very busy; and this has become apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The technological advances (such as the above-mentioned multi-omics) will have an impact on the role of national research institutes in the development of new seeds and therefore in the sustainability of the SD=HS approach. These advances will mainly affect PVD and PVE; and to a lesser extent PVS (the most used approach under Pillar 1), which mainly involves testing public sector varieties. According to experts, these advancements are likely to facilitate the ability of NARS to identify, select and introduce traits into new varieties, and will make the work of farmers slower and more insecure by comparison. However, there are no concrete signs that the programme is taking these elements into account, although it is aware of them.

Other sustainability factors

Seed banks

Community Seed Banks (CSBs) have the potential to contribute to the sustainability of the overall results of the SD=HS programme. Positive examples of collaboration that seem likely to continue were noted in Zambia, where thanks to the success of CSBs through high community ownership, growing collaboration with the government has allowed for the construction of another seed bank without SD=HS funding. Community buy-in has been evidenced through the donation of adjacent land for an FFS and other forms of community-led investment that have also resulted in the construction of the access road at no-cost to the programme.

In Nepal, the programme has been working with CSBs to demonstrate a model by creating a seed system or FSE to meet local needs, so that excess production can be sold in the market to increase sustainability.

In Zimbabwe, CSBs conserving varieties are now managed by teams made up of farmers, local government, and traditional leaders, who share a common view on the advantages of having these banks. Consulted stakeholders believe that they will continue beyond the life of the programme.

According to several stakeholders, in Guatemala, CSBs established before the SD=HS programme also have a strong position and well-established role as part of the sustainability prospects of the programme.

Finally, it was noted that CSBs can also be crucial for recovering germplasm but in order to be sustainable, they must be well connected to national programmes and National Gene Banks.

The promotion of alliances

Evidence from this MTR suggests that networks and alliances can provide a key pathway for sustainability, since they can allow results to be transferred and scaled up by other CSOs and institutions (like FFS in Uganda) beyond the life of the programme. As already noted under Relevance, Oxfam is well-placed to bring organizations together (including organizations that think differently). However, a clearer definition of what is meant by institutionalisation is needed before a logical pathway can be articulated.

Contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment would also benefit from building more and better alliances and partnerships with women's organizations to carry this work into the future, as noted by Oxfam in Peru.

At the grassroots level, the key is to ensure that there is farmer ownership, and the MTR has received positive feedback that this exists across countries. Finally, it is important to note that several strategic partnerships that can advance ongoing discussions on new technologies are already part of the landscape (including with key research organisations such as ICRISAT).

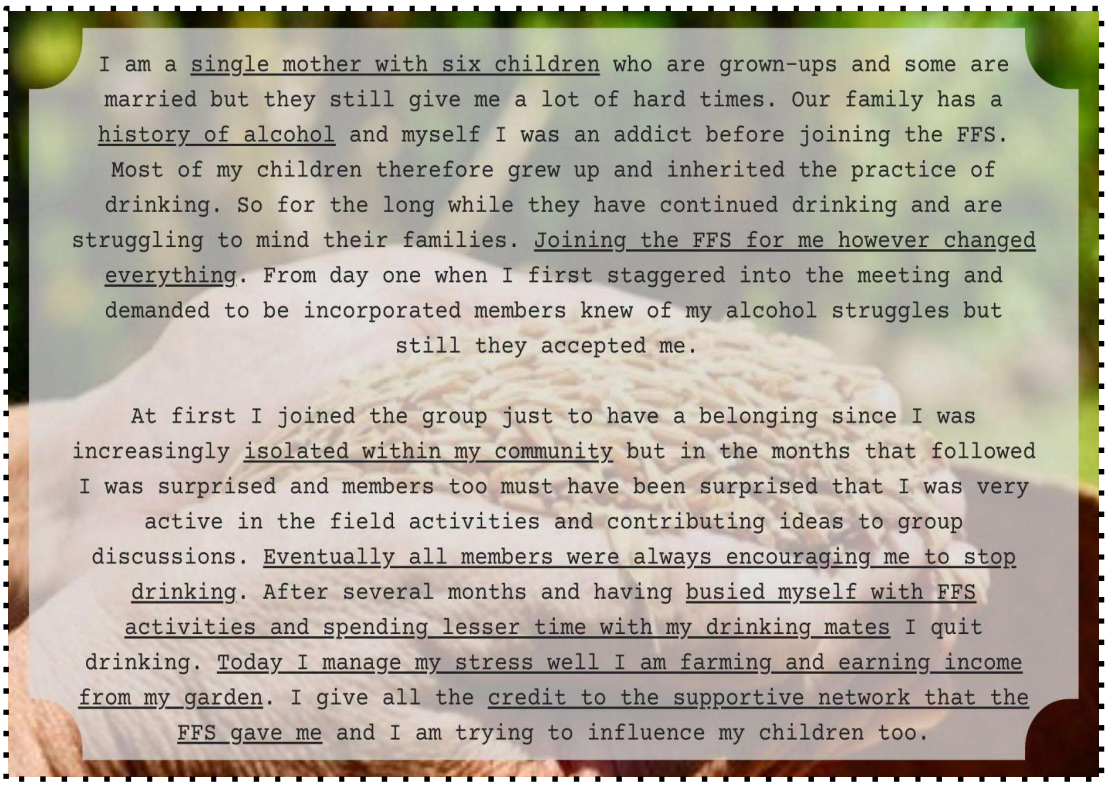
LEARNING - Are opportunities to link and learn being maximised?

7.1. MEAL Systems

> "*The approach to MEAL in the SD=HS program is inspired by Oxfam's Common Approach to MEAL and Social Accountability (CAMSA), as well as experiences from SD=HS in previous years. A key recommendation from the evaluation of the program in 2013-2018 was the "need for a more systematic but less difficult MEAL system that responds to the needs of all stakeholders and that will improve overall reporting*" (PKM and Learning Strategy, 2020).

As the previous evaluation has shown, the programme's MEAL system is still not doing justice to the many nuanced results (see Figure 26) that SD=HS is achieving, nor is it proving useful for measuring progress in its ToC.

Figure 26: A story from Sprockler



It needs to be acknowledged though, that phase two introduced a number of very positive measures, some of which have been recently implemented and therefore still have the potential to greatly improve the system between now and the end of the programme.

The monitoring system of the second phase compared to the first phase has implied a considerable simplification of the framework, allowing quantitative monitoring of progress that has informed the management of SD=HS and donor reporting. Learning questions have been introduced in the learning strategy with the potential to inform "a proof of concept" that can play an essential role in the demonstrative value of the programme. Most significantly, as mentioned previously, the tool built on Kobo also has the potential to address several of the MEAL shortcomings identified by this MTR.

Additionally, it has to be noted that it is not surprising that there is a broad consensus on: a) the extraordinary complexity of effectively monitoring such a programme (with the variety of themes, countries, and actors involved), and b) the lack of resources devoted to this area of SD=HS, which many have described as an "add on".

> "*(the MEAL system) seems like an add on and not as a core value for the quality and the impact. It's like something you do extra to show off or nice publications. It´s not part of our identity. Resources would not be put into this; we would rather go for an extra geographical area*" (SD=HS core team).

This lack of resources does not refer exclusively to financial resources (see Figure 13 under 3.1.) but also to the lack of spaces at the strategic level for reflection and decision-making to establish what needs to be learned; who is to learn it; and for what use(s). This means spaces involving ON in The Hague, Oxfam Offices in the countries and partners, as opposed to existing spaces (such as end-of-season evaluations that are very valuable spaces to reflect at the level of particular FFSs but not more strategically at the country and/or global level).

In addition, the current planning and monitoring framework contains a number of technical shortcomings (mostly inherited from the original design phase) that hinder rather than facilitate the raison d'être of a useful MEAL system.

Alignment with the overall ToC

The overall objective of the SD=HS programme as defined in the framework[31], and most critically, its associated indicators, are not convergent with the demonstrative value that stakeholders assign to the programme, particularly in ONL.

In fact, the focus of the indicators for this overall objective is to measure the outreach (i.e., number of households reached by the project). In any development programme there is an obvious intrinsic value in measuring the outreach quantitatively, as the more people the programme reaches, the more people who benefit. However, as already mentioned under 1.1. Oxfam and its partners have also emphasised that SD=HS has a demonstrative value. In other words, it tries to demonstrate that the approach it uses works so that others are encouraged to scale it up. There is wide consensus that the programme by itself does not have the capacity to reach a critical mass of people for long enough to change the way breeding is done in a given region or country. It is therefore not clear why it is so important to reach X number of participants, if the intention is not to reach a tipping point. So, a legitimate question to ask would be: why is 250.000 households (current set target) the adequate number to demonstrate value and scale up?

[31] "The overall objective of the SD=HS programme is that indigenous peoples and smallholder farmers enjoy their Farmers' Rights and have the capacity to access, develop and use plant genetic resources to improve their food and nutrition security under conditions of climate change".

At the same time, there are other aspects that have an extraordinary weight in the logic of SD=HS, for example, the institutionalisation of approaches, for which only one indicator has been formulated[32] (exclusively quantitative).

Quantitative and qualitative

Figure 27: Good indicators (Naomi Falkenburg, 2021)

The vast majority of indicators are quantitative, and even those that include qualitative parameters are reported with numbers. This approach facilitates comparability between countries, although it is a false comparability.

For example, in the indicator "Number of FFSs (per country and total) with farmer-participants able to access, select and improve varieties", the number of FFS is reported but not the quality of the parameters set by the indicator. However, it is safe to assume that not all farmers participating in the FFSs across countries would have the same capacity "to access, select and improve varieties". Understanding the factors that affect this capacity and how this capacity evolves is essential for grasping the success factors of the FFSs. Actually, one could argue that for demonstrative purposes it is more important to understand the quality of the FFSs rather than how many they are.

In other cases, quality parameters are absent in the formulation of the indicators. For example, an indicator under Pillar 2 is "Number of feasibility studies and business plans for FSEs performed". However, this indicator would not inform the programme about whether these studies are of good quality or if they are informing FSEs' management decisions. One of the dangers of these types of indicators is that they can easily become an end in themselves, i.e., FSEs develop business plans not because they find them useful but because the project has asked them to do so in order to populate the monitoring matrix.

It is important to acknowledge that formulating appropriate indicators is very difficult, even for experts. Moreover, the need to stick to classic parameters such as SMART indicators can be more challenging than helpful[33].

"A" for Accountability

The letter A in MEAL (which was introduced in the sector jargon by Oxfam), relates to the target audiences of the monitoring exercise. This is all linked to where the project's accountability lies, whether it is with the smallholder farmers, with the partners, with Oxfam´s management, with the donors or with the public in general.

The MTR has found that these audiences (i.e., the users of the monitoring information), are not strategically defined.

At the moment, the data collected through monitoring tools is used to inform three types of audiences: to prepare reports to the donor, to elaborate communication

[32] "Cases of public sector institutions adopting and/or institutionalising FFS approach"
[33]https://www.betterevaluation.org/sites/default/files/EA_PM%26E_toolkit_module_2_objectives%26indicators_for_publication.pdf

policies for the general public, and to showcase examples that illustrate advocacy work. In all of these cases, products are required that exhibit the success of the programme.

However, what is missing is to what extent and under what mechanisms this information serves to foster reflections on the ToC between the core team in the Hague and Oxfam country offices, partners and other key stakeholders such as FSEs and FFS facilitators.

This point is closely related to the concept of participatory monitoring. Returning to the reference of types of participation used by Cornwall (Figure 18 under 4.3.), the MTR finds that the type of monitoring that SD=HS develops is of the "instrumental" type. This means that the various stakeholders mentioned[34] participate in data collection on the premise that this is the most efficient way to collect information needed by other audiences, not them. This is, they participate in the MEAL system largely to feed it, not to shape it, to question it or to use the learning emanating from it to inform their strategies and actions.

The clearest example is how FFSs are collecting and using the information required by Kobo (see Kobo box below).

Nevertheless, it is fair to highlight that even if the overall MEAL system is more extractive than participatory, Oxfam has made great efforts to design and introduce participatory tools like WhatsApp groups or the end of season evaluations to counter this. However, it has not been possible to determine how FFSs and others use the information collected in these spaces nor how this information relates to the programme's MEAL system.

Going back to the central idea of the demonstrative value of the project, experts consulted by the MTR have identified the NARS as a key audience that should be involved in the MEAL system. As a central part of the institutionalisation of FFSs, these entities would have to play an active role in determining what they need to know in order to be convinced that this approach is beneficial.

Rigour

As noted in the chapter on Effectiveness, one of the most pressing concerns of the monitoring system is the inconsistency of available data that undermines the credibility of the information shared.

This inconsistency is reflected in different aspects and at different levels. For example, in the different definitions of indicators and targets in different documents; in the interchangeable use of concepts in the monitoring matrix that are not comparable such as "household" and "people"; in the difficult traceability between what is reported and the sources where the information comes from; in the omission in important reports (such as in the 2020 Annual Report) of results on an entire outcome of the project (namely the learning component); or in the lack of checks and balances mechanisms to guarantee the veracity of the information that is collected.

In addition to issues related to the original design of the monitoring framework (probably due to lack of time and/or resources), consulted stakeholders pointed to a number of reasons for these inconsistencies:

- The system is still too complex. There are too many ad hoc requests, and duplication in the type of information required. "We have multi-level reporting requirements and duplication of reporting and to some extent excess of reporting. Sometimes it takes up a great amount of your time which can be negative on the operation side" (SD=HS partner).

[34] Oxfam country offices, partners and other key stakeholders such as FSEs and FFS facilitators.

- It attempts to systematise and homogenise realities that have been occurring organically for many years in very different contexts. "*PPB has been growing organically for 10 years. It is a nightmare for systematising*" (Expert).

- Monitoring requires dedicated resources that are not always available where they are needed (see 3.1.). Part of this lack of resources relates to the equipment, skills and expertise to monitor, for example, facilitators and master facilitators.

- The excessive centralisation of the monitoring system, which has already been discussed, means that there is little ownership by the people who are closest to the information and who ultimately collect it. Consequently, there has been a tendency to collect and share what Oxfam wants to hear.

- There has not yet been enough time for new monitoring tools such as Kobo to consolidate.

Zooming in - KOBO

- KOBO has generated a lot of information in a highly complex context which is great.
- It is expected that the tool informs a more sophisticated type of reporting that can go systematically beyond reporting on outputs.
- However, it only covers the FFSs and not all the aspects that occur there, for example the qualitative changes that are occurring in gender work are not captured.
- Open questions in KOBO present two difficulties: transcription from a mobile phone or tablet is slow, and the power of Kobo cannot be used to analyse the answers.
- Interface for different audiences - who decides who sees what in the dashboard that is being designed?

7.2. Knowledge management.

The SD=HS programme has developed a Participatory Knowledge Management and Learning Strategy with a view to strengthening its approach as a programme that "*seeks to combine indigenous/local knowledge with scientific knowledge and to work together with knowledge institutes and technical experts*".

Apart from presenting its vision, this document also sets out a series of principles/features that the strategy should have, namely: participatory, shared, effective, accountable, lean and integrated; as well as four components: 1) participatory knowledge management, 2) knowledge platform, 3) strategic positioning and 4) monitoring, evaluation and accountability. However, despite positive advances, this strategy has not translated into a structured and comprehensive approach that effectively captures the positive results of the programme and maximises learning opportunities.

7.2.1. Knowledge generation

Knowledge is both implicitly and explicitly at the heart of the SD=HS programme. As stated in the programme's Participatory Knowledge Management and Learning Strategy, "*SD=HS aims to be a knowledge and action research driven programme. This means that we promote the development of new knowledge by fostering research and innovations as an important strategy to achieve our overall objective to further food and nutrition security*".

There is extensive evidence of different types of knowledge generation across the programme at many different levels. The richness and diversity of this knowledge and its multiple uses (learning, influencing practices, guiding advocacy, informing policymaking, etc.) constitute key strengths of the programme. The first context in which knowledge is being generated is in FFSs, where learning is integral to the approach and its objectives. The collaboration of research centres and farmers facilitated by the programme makes FFSs valuable spaces for the co-creation of knowledge, since they are bringing together scientific and local and/or indigenous forms of knowledge.

The knowledge and learning that is being generated is informing articles and providing case studies that inform advocacy and policy work. The programme is praised for providing strategic "stories from the field" at a time when Oxfam Novib is moving away from delivery to focus on influencing. Case studies from the programme are also being used to bring the perspectives of smallholder farmers to international fora, which suggests that the programme is of significant instrumental value to the Oxfam Confederation and its global agenda.

At the field level, the 342 stories of change collected through Sprockler provide extensive evidence of the central role of learning in the programme.

Furthermore, these stories show that the type of learning that is taking place across the programme is leading to changes in practices of relevance to its core objectives. These changes are not only linked to issues related to the development of seed varieties but also to other agricultural practices.

A web-based platform has been set up for a public audience as part of efforts to share knowledge and learning beyond the programme. It also includes a regular newsletter. However, this platform does not fulfil the objective set out in the Participatory Knowledge Management and Learning Strategy of "facilitating exchange between programme stakeholders", nor the expectations of partners of an "intranet-type" of platform for horizontal experience-sharing.

Overall, the country-specific annual reports contain few details of the outputs completed and overall progress towards the programme's learning outcome. Furthermore, the latest consolidated Annual Report for 2020 has omitted the programme's fourth outcome (learning) and does not include any information related to learning and knowledge, despite being at the core of the programme. A possible explanation is according to ON, implementing this learning strategy was largely based on field visits that have not been conducted due to the restrictions derived from the pandemic of COVID-19.

7.2.2. Knowledge brokering

The concept of knowledge brokering differs from knowledge management in that beyond serving as custodians of information and knowledge, knowledge brokers play a key role in translating different types of knowledge to make them accessible to different audiences. Knowledge brokers also serve as a bridge between actors, contexts and cultures to maximise learning opportunities.

The SD=HS programme (especially the ON Global Team) is not only uniquely placed to play a knowledge brokering role but is also expected by a wide range of stakeholders (from external organizations such as FAO to programme partners) to play this role and to serve as an effective knowledge hub. This was already identified in Phase 1 of the programme and although the programme's Participatory Knowledge Management and Learning Strategy constitutes a step in the right direction, there is scope to play a greater role in the sector and great potential to make a more valuable contribution in this realm.

Consulted stakeholders agree that the ON Global Team's central position constitutes a key added value, since it is well placed to build relationships and networks across a broad range of actors and is well-informed of what is happening in the

sector. Furthermore, ON also has the credibility to play this type of role and facilitate links between the knowledge, contexts and cultures of partners[35]. There is both scope and potential to do more in this realm, given the positive results that the programme is achieving and the important role that learning plays in the programme.

7.2.3. Participatory knowledge management and learning

During the inception phase, stakeholders highlighted that the main motivation for participating in the SD=HS programme was "the opportunity to learn". The programme is generating a wealth of knowledge and learning at many different levels. End-of-season evaluations and FFS sessions are excellent examples of the spaces where knowledge is being generated. Spontaneous/informal exchanges are taking place among countries and teams that are also conducive to learning, while the global WhatsApp group is making an important contribution to horizontal exchanges. However, consulted stakeholders noted that key learning spaces and opportunities tend to be constructed by the ON Global Team as opposed to being designed at the country level, and that the current arrangements offer limited opportunities for more structured/systematic cross-country learning and for learning between the ON Global Team and the partners.

Consulted stakeholders acknowledged that they were insufficiently exposed to what colleagues were doing in other countries, and that the programme could provide more spaces for stakeholders to share information and come together. At the same time, it was noted that although many positive results at the local level (e.g. farmers who have secured a significant income, and who have been able to build a new house)could be used for learning purposes, tools were not available to capture lessons and share them, while time limitations and the demands of programme implementation also deterred learning.

Programme partners have described attempts to hold more learning events per pillar and across continents but there have been various time/availability issues, apart from difficulties linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as difficulties using online tools.

A related aspect that deserves attention is China's role in the programme as a "learning and linking" partner. In practice, China is conducting similar activities and reporting in a similar manner to other countries, and the specific and concrete "learning and linking role" that the Chinese partners are playing is still unclear. There is a wealth of knowledge and experience of relevance to the programme that is being generated in China but so far there is no distinctive learning and linking strategy beyond what has organically evolved through the different activities organised by the programme.

7.2.4 Learning journeys

As emphasised throughout this report, learning and capacity-building are key result areas of the programme. These aspects are not only relevant for smallholder farmers since the type of action-research that is promoted allows for multi-stakeholder engagement at different levels. However, in the absence of a clearly outlined learning journey/itinerary for those playing a key role, current incentives are limited, especially considering that certain pivotal positions (such as facilitators) generally receive only funds to cover transport and per diems.

[35] See Cummings et al (2018) for details on knowledge brokering in international development.

Conclusions

RELEVANCE

1. The SD=HS programme is highly relevant at two levels. Firstly, it clearly responds to a series of recognised needs and rights of indigenous peoples, smallholder farmers, women and youth. Secondly, it is also relevant at the global level, since it contributes to efforts to rebalance power relations by bringing smallholder farmers to an international arena where their interests are not always considered.

2. The relevance of the SD=HS programme is also closely related to the demonstrative value of its approach, since the programme will continue to remain relevant if it uses this demonstrative value to secure buy-in from organisations that can institutionalise the programme's approach and scale it up.

3. The theme of the programme is clearly relevant to all stakeholders (IPSHF, governments, CSOs, Oxfam, research institutions, donors, etc.). Although its alignment with Oxfam Novib and the Oxfam family is uncertain in a context marked by restructuring and the shift to "One Oxfam", this can be seen as an opportunity to align the programme with other existing (and emerging) themes of common relevance.

COHERENCE

4. The SD=HS programme has a strong and well-articulated logic, accompanied by an impeccable narrative that is widely shared and understood by all the stakeholders involved. Various assumptions are still to be proved or challenged, partly as a result of the timeframe of the programme (especially in relation to the interlinkages between the four pillars and to how Pillar 4 relates to the other three pillars, as "glocal" hub of the programme).

5. Certain implementation efforts have been diverted towards expanding scope and focus (such as increasing the number of countries working on Pillar 3 activities and the number of pilots under Pillar 2), as a result of the programme's commitment to the communities and the long-standing relation with partners.

6. A key strength of the SD=HS programme is the wealth of synergies built between the SD=HS programme and other initiatives, including excellent collaboration and networking with key sector actors. At present, the programme continues to occupy a unique position in the sector and there are no duplications of its role.

EFFICIENCY

7. The ON Global Team, Oxfam Country Offices and implementing partners have succeeded in efficiently coordinating and managing resources to ensure timely approval of budgetary changes so that funds could be spent with positive results despite COVID-19-related challenges, coupled with factors such as extreme weather events and elections in several countries

8. The SD=HS programme is being delivered according to annual work plans agreed between Oxfam Novib, Oxfam Country Offices and partners in the 8 countries with an overall delivery rate of 89% that is remarkable in the current context.

9. The programme's distribution of financial resources raises questions about where decisions are made, levels of participation and accountability. The Oxfam Novib

Global Team spent 43% and 38% of the total budget in 2019 and 2020. Funds are distributed differently across countries: Pillars 2 and 4 are the most centralised; Pillar 1 receives the highest total allocation, while Pillar 4 receives the lowest (14%), despite its centrality to the programme's Theory of Change.

10. Apart from the distribution of a large volume of funds to cover human resources across countries and pillars, there is a high time investment on the part of various stakeholders (most notably facilitators) that constitutes a valuable resource and a key factor for the programme's success that is not always sufficiently acknowledged.

11. The programme's current distribution of resources between Oxfam Novib and the eight countries covered by the programme is not in alignment with One Oxfam's 2030 strategy (which requires a greater shift of resources to the Global South) and would involve rebalancing the programme's current distribution.

12. Coordination between implementing partners and the Oxfam Novib Global Team has been effective and fluid throughout implementation. Although the role of Oxfam Country Offices introduced in Phase 2 introduced an additional layer of coordination, this new set-up seems to be working adequately, with relations between the Oxfam Novib Global Team, implementing partners and Oxfam Country Offices varying across countries.

EFFECTIVENESS

13. Despite facing significant challenges and in particular the COVID-19 pandemic that began to sweep the world in early 2020, the SD=HS programme has achieved many positive results under all four pillars and across the eight countries of implementation. However, given existing discrepancies in the available data, it is difficult to ascertain the level of achievement compared to what was planned.

14. Implementation of the four pillars has advanced at different rhythms across countries as a result of multiple factors, the most important ones being: firstly, the capabilities of implementing partners and secondly, the length of time that partners had been working on the programme's theme and approach for.

15. The FFS approach is the programme's "bread and butter" in all countries. The results to date suggest that there is a clear preference for PVS (Plant Variety Selection) over PVE (Plant Variety Enhancement) and PVD (Plant Variety Development, called PPB in Laos). The level of choice of each mode is inversely proportional to its technical complexity. The wide use of genetic material provided by research institutions shows the good functioning of the relationship with NARS and CGIAR organisations and can be considered a key achievement of the programme.

16. The Farmer Seed Enterprise (FSE) pilots promoted by the programme have advanced well in Guatemala, Nepal, and Zimbabwe; with seed multiplication emerging as a clear source of income for SHFs, despite challenges related to legislation and registration processes, as well as climate-related factors.

17. A new approach to nutrition has been adopted under Pillar 3 that builds on the pilot developed in Zimbabwe in Phase 1 and is gradually being rolled out (to various degrees) in Guatemala, Nepal, Laos, Peru, Uganda and Zambia. In countries with higher biodiversity and biomass production (Peru, Uganda, Guatemala), there were no reported problems in accessing NUS in times of crisis. However, in Zimbabwe,

where food insecurity situations are more extreme, the contribution of NUS is less certain.

18. Under Pillar 3, new monitoring tools are being developed to support ongoing efforts to establish links between local and traditional knowledge and scientific knowledge and verify claims about the virtues of local species and their effects on nutrition or health.

19. Pillar 4 has changed strategies from global to glocal with positive results, even if the programme's experience to date suggests that it remains difficult to translate advocacy achievements at the global level (especially those related to raising awareness of farmers' rights) into changes in national laws.

20. Although China has a different status in the programme as "linking and learning partner"; in practice, it is conducting similar activities to the other countries with positive results to date.

21. The SD=HS programme demands high levels of participation from stakeholders and its narrative promotes transformative changes through empowerment. In practice, this translates into a highly participatory approach in the FFS that is transformative in nature. In terms of the management and governance of the programme key questions were raised about where decisions are made or how funding is managed, hence the type of participation that emerges seems to be more of a representative or instrumental nature.

22. There have been great efforts by the SD=HS programme to facilitate women's participation at all levels with positive results across activities. This promotion has been more successful under Pillars 1 and 3 than under Pillars 2 and 4, with positive challenges to gender roles but also risks of perpetuating traditional ones under Pillar 3. Beyond gender representation, there is a dearth of gender analysis (and uneven levels of gender expertise across teams).

23. Youth participation in the programme has benefitted from the establishment of youth led FFS but remains a challenge, particularly that of male youth, given the wider range of employment and income opportunities available to them compared to women.

24. The participation of indigenous peoples is high in countries such as Peru and Guatemala and constitutes a positive aspect of the programme, even if in the absence of a clear strategy with concrete targets and disaggregated monitoring data, it is difficult to ascertain whether their participation is meeting the objectives of the programme.

CONTRIBUTION TO CHANGES

25. There have been many contributions to changes through the SD=HS programme. This is most remarkable, especially taking into account that most of the programme has been carried out under adverse global conditions due to the COVID 19 pandemic. These contributions have been from personal to collective, under the four pillars (including under capacities, access to resources, behaviours, practices, nutrition etc.). Most of them were of a collective nature (as opposed to focusing on changes at the individual level), with the community dimension playing a central role.

26. Most of the contributions to changes described were related to learning and the acquisition of new skills. The type of capacity-building that emerged was always linked to applied learning and how it served to change practices that were mainly related to the field of agriculture.

27. Contributions to collective changes are also closely linked to building networks and alliances. Oxfam's unique role as convener has been central for influencing changes at the policy level in both the national and international scene. These contributions to change have been most obvious at the global level.

SUSTAINABILITY

28. Ensuring the sustainability of the results of the SD=HS programme constitutes a long-term process that depends on the commitment and the capacity of the different stakeholders to maintain their engagement over time. It is highly likely that implementing partners will continue, especially since they are directly accountable to farmers and their communities, while the level of Oxfam Novib's commitment under the new strategic direction is less certain.

29. There have been important efforts to institutionalise FFS, with positive advances to date (such as the signing of MoUs and the commitment of NARS). However, the process will require greater programmatic weight in the remaining implementation period.

30. The results that are more likely to continue beyond the life of the programme are those related to capacity-building (certain acquired skills that will continue to be applied regardless of funding), followed by FFS, since given the high level of farmer ownership, it seems possible that some FFS may also continue beyond 2022.

31. Under Pillar 2, although overall prospects are improving, ensuring the sustainability of FSEs will require more time, regardless of whether pilots rely on well-established cooperatives that already existed or whether they are established as companies built from scratch.

32. Results under Pillar 4 that have influenced policy practices are likely to be sustainable, even if political changes at both the national and international levels can have unexpected effects.

33. Innovation in the SD=HS programme is understood in many ways. It seems to be a variable concept for different stakeholders that is sometimes related to simple improvements related to everyday practices, while for others, it is more linked to ambitious technological goals.

LEARNING

34. There have been significant improvements (such as the introduction of KOBO) in the programme's MEAL system that have great potential to improve monitoring efforts and capture contributions to results that are key for evidencing the programme's overall results and doing justice to achievements to date.

35. Due to the great complexity of the SD=HS programme and the multiple efforts to address monitoring challenges, there are discrepancies across monitoring sources and reported data, which affects the overall credibility of the information available.

36. SD=HS is uniquely placed to play a knowledge brokering role in the sector. The programme's Participatory Knowledge Management and Learning Strategy constitutes another positive step in this direction, especially if it maximises opportunities to share the wealth of knowledge generated by the programme and strengthens this dimension through its "linking and learning partner"

37. Learning constitutes a key result area of the programme that is relevant for all stakeholders, since the type of action-research that is promoted allows for multi-stakeholder engagement at different levels.

Recommendations

Programme structure and focus

1.- Strengthen coordination and integration among pillars.

It is recommended to strengthen coordination among the first three pillars so that all programme activities are clearly connected to the FFSs. In the case of Pillar 2, this should not mean excluding FSEs engaged in the programme, but clearly connecting how the subsidisation and marketing of PPB varieties emerging from FFSs would be integrated into their business plans. In the case of Pillar 3, it would mean lowering expectations about the results in drought-prone areas (such as Zimbabwe's Zone 5), i.e., aim at increasing food diversity rather than overcoming a lean season through NUS.

In the case of Pillar 4, the objective would be to clearly connect the policy asks that emerge from the work in the first three pillars to inform the programme's advocacy work, especially at the local and national level (in a flexible, organic, and opportunistic way).

2.- Strengthen the programme's policy practice influencing component.

Efforts to influence policy practice need to be more clearly articulated and properly resourced. This involves formulating targets around the institutionalisation of the components (especially the institutionalisation of FFSs), to cover aspects such as: a) influencing the budget cycle of the competent authorities and/or other relevant organisations such as FAO; b) continuing to develop and negotiate MoUs with NARS; c) expanding and nurturing the role of extension workers and nutritionists in the FFSs; d) upgrading and coaching facilitators and master facilitators so that they can become institutionalisation agents. In order to achieve this, it would be important to provide them with learning itineraries and professional development plans which can play a double role: on the one hand, to maximise learning opportunities and on the other hand, to provide additional incentives.

3.- Join the (glocal) dots.

More programmatic attention needs to be paid to how the different components (pillars) of SD=HS interconnect as a whole. In addition to interlinking all pillars around FFSs at the national level, this approach also requires better planning and a better comprehension of the interconnections between the macro and the micro levels.

This involves understanding, influencing and raising awareness on how global policies translate into national policies, how they may inform practices in both FFSs and FSEs, and ultimately how they affect the life of the women and men participating in SD=HS.

> Establishing connections/relationships between the different treaties (CBD, the Plant Treaty, UPOV) and explaining what is at stake in each would be useful.

4.- Maximise the demonstrative value.

The project should focus on gathering sufficient and solid evidence to demonstrate that the approaches employed in SD=HS distinctly benefit SHFs (women and men). Explicit strategies should be devised to ensure that this evidence informs relevant audiences, namely; a) NARS and other relevant governmental and intergovernmental bodies that may scale up at the national level; b) international organisations (or policy-making species), whether from the private or public sector, that have influence in dictating sectoral trends; c) Oxfam's global campaigns related to different aspects of the programme such as Resilience to Climate Change or Gender Equality. For this to be possible, it is important for Oxfam to renew its engagement with existing partners for long enough. It would also be wise to focus on this long-term demonstration objective and not to expand further either geographically or thematically.

5.- Be more inclusive.

As the SD=HS approach is a long-distance race, it would be wise to redouble efforts to get young people more involved. The project should devise specific strategies with partners, FFSs and FSEs to explore possible avenues adapted to different contexts where SD=HS operates. In any case, it would be interesting to explore strategies where the economic prospects provide young people with sufficient incentives to be involved.

The engagement of women in all facets of SD=HS also requires more attention, especially their integration into FSEs and advocacy work at all levels (global and national). For this to happen in a systematic way, it would be necessary for the programme to have a full-time gender mainstreaming expert.

Management of resources

6. Embrace the concept that "time is money".

In managing the programme's resources, it is essential that the time invested by the various stakeholders is made visible and valued. This is important at all levels of the programme but especially in the case of facilitators and master facilitators. SD=HS must ensure that all are adequately resourced to manage the demands on their time effectively. For example, providing them with bicycles or motorbikes if they are expected to travel long distances to facilitate FFSs or smartphones if they are expected to engage in training or monitoring activities more efficiently.

It is equally essential that demands for time are made from a gender perspective and that emphasis continues to be placed on making it easier for women to find work-life balance.

7. Re-balance the power.

At the heart of all SD=HS is the implicit recognition that power relations are unequal, and the related goal of changing the balance of power in favour of those who do not normally have it.

To shift power among SD=HS stakeholders, it is essential to balance budget allocations managed by The Hague and by the countries so that financial control (a very explicit form of power) is more decentralised.

This is particularly important in view of the corporate strategy to reverse the investment in resources from 70% at headquarters and 30% in countries to 70% in countries and 30% at headquarters. SD=HS is still a long way from this goal, and it is important that it devises strategies to progressively achieve it.

It is also important to rethink how financial resources are distributed among the different elements of SD=HS and particularly to increase resources for the advocacy component which has an unequivocal prominence in the ToC. Related to this point, it would be advisable for national counterparts rather than Oxfam offices to manage the resources earmarked for this purpose.

Any re-balancing of power needs would need the identification of clear roles and responsibilities within the different program strategies, as well as the definition of clear authority lines.

8. Be more transparent.

It is advisable to design more transparent communication and information systems to resolve conflicts and manage change.

Monitoring and accountability

9. Generate information depending on the uses.

The MEAL system needs to be further refined, starting with defining the users and uses of the information generated. The type of information that each audience requires should be decided with each audience. For example, define with the FFS what information they need and how it is most useful for them to make it available; define with the NARS what kind of information they need to be convinced of the value of the FFS; negotiate with the donor what information they need to justify their investment in the programme, etc. The aim should be to simplify systems and in no case to collect information that will not be used.

Knowledge management and learning

10. Participatory Knowledge Management and Learning

The implementation of the Participatory Knowledge Management and Learning Strategy (PKMLS) should be strengthened by developing country-based components that make the strategy more relevant and effective at the country-level, ensuring that the themes addressed are as close as possible to the specific realities of the countries, and promoting “learning spaces” at the national level that could build on existing spaces (such as the FFS sessions). The strategy should also be more conducive to generating cross-country learning and could include other initiatives such as an

annual conference and additional cross-country exchanges (as currently coordinated by the Roving Technical Officer between Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

The role of China as "learning and linking partner" should be clearly defined in order to maximise opportunities to share the wealth of knowledge generated by the programme with the support of a highly experienced partner.

ONL should consider the possibility of playing a more central role in the sector as knowledge broker, through a platform or hub that maximises the knowledge and experience acquired over the years (as well as its partnerships and networks) and helps to bridge the advocacy-policymaking gap by showcasing evidence.

Under this component, ONL should also consider strengthening its knowledge and understanding of gender issues by conducting gender analysis of policies affecting women and research studies to gain a deeper understanding of the intervention's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Possible future scenarios

11. Look forward.

At this stage of the programme, it is essential that Oxfam Novib works with partners to design possible future scenarios, including exit strategies. These scenarios must take into account internal elements of the SD=HS approach such as the time it takes to demonstrate its value, but also external elements such as Oxfam's reorganisation process, or how new technologies may affect FFSs.

Multi-omics

Oxfam Novib and partners will have to keep an eye on the evolution of multi-omics. For example, could this mean that the work of farmers will be more focused on providing new varieties to the NARS? i.e., letting the NARS do the trait selection (PVE, PVD?), and then come back to farmers just for testing (PVS). Multi-omics will increase the efficiency of selecting and developing traits. NARS are likely to adopt it because it will be cheaper. PPB will have to choose how to continue the collaboration with NARS (perhaps prioritising setting breeding objectives and PVS), but if NARS can do something in one year that takes three years to farmers, it is likely that they will choose not to wait for farmers just for budgetary reasons. Adaptation to the coming situation is unavoidable, but it doesn't mean to stop collaboration, but doing it differently. It could even be good for PPB, because budgets will be lower.

Technical

12. On types of seeds.

Promote seed multiplication for established enterprises (such as in Guatemala or Nepal) and in environments that are not too climatically risky (which would rule out the attractiveness of Zimbabwe's Zone V for multiplying small grains).

Using already established cooperatives by adding seed production to their portfolio is quicker and more efficient than creating enterprises from scratch. If you have no choice but to start from scratch, be patient, it takes many years.

Seed production in climate-risk areas can lead to losses. Abandoning this type of production would go against the objectives of the programme, so it is recommended that these represent a small part of the portfolio, leaving the rest to commercial seeds, and insuring crops through index insurance (Recommendation 13).

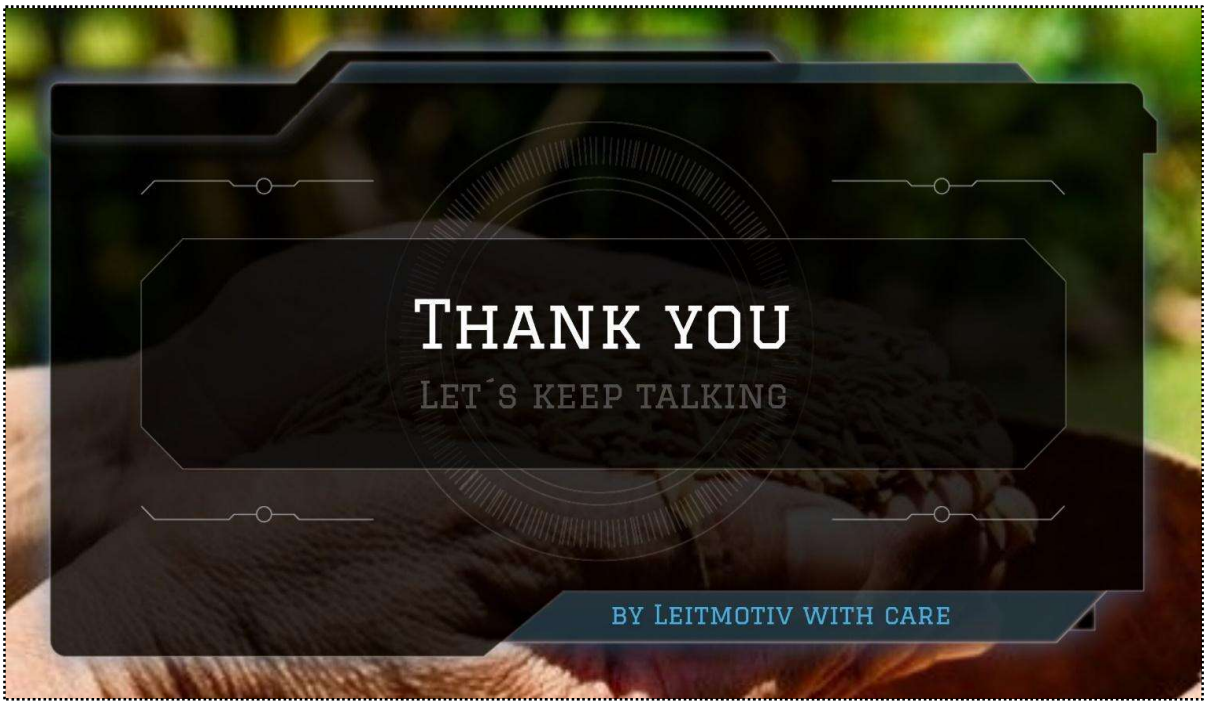
13.- Insurable risk.

The catastrophic loss of the sorghum crop in Zimbabwe shows a disaster that can affect any of the Pillar 2 enterprises. In some countries, index insurance (based on weather indices and not on damage assessments) already exists that could insure a decrease in turnover and non-recovery of input credits.

In Africa, there is a programme, African Risk Capacity (ARC), which insures governments for drought losses at the national level, and the government is then responsible for the distribution of compensation. ARC has considered the possibility of insuring cooperatives as well as governments (a type of insurance called "meso"), so establishing discussions would be interesting for FSEs.

14.- On NUS.

It would be desirable to collect more evidence on the impact of NUS on nutrition (including the existence of anti-nutritional factors), based on medical and laboratory analysis, and ideally with a baseline if data exists in nearby clinics[36]. In case this research does not show a high relevance, promoting awareness and use of NUS should in no way preclude other options such as local food reserves to cope with the lean season, climate insurance to cover crop losses or advocacy for social safety nets (school meals, cash transfers).



[36] As part of the Pillar 3 baseline, a list of local food plants was selected per country (based on farmer's interviews and evaluations of country partners) to revise their nutritional values based on data from food composition tables. This work is currently ongoing and would be ready by end this year or early next year. A book will be prepared based on the results of this revision.