

Livelihood Early Recovery in Upper Swat and Buner Districts, Pakistan

**Mid-Term Peer Review Exercise
December 2010**



The evaluation team from OGB, OAU, Lasoona and RDP on the last day of the review process.

Executive Summary

Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly known as North West Frontier Province) is faced with the challenge of resettling Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) due to the conflict between the invading Taliban and the Pakistan security forces. The IDPs from Swat, Buner, Lower and Upper Dir have gradually returned back to their villages but many now face the challenge of recovering their livelihoods. In this context, OGB has initiated a Cash for Work (CFW) program in areas of recent return, which are still lacking assistance in regaining their livelihoods. This program has been supported by Oxfam Australia, with funds from AusAID.

This Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) exercise was conducted towards the start of the project so that issues could be identified early on and adjustments can be made to the project implementation based on the recommendations of this exercise. The MEL team consisted of OGB and Oxfam Australia (OAU) staff and the staff of the two partner organisations Rural Development Project (RDP) and Lasoona. RDP is implementing the project in Buner district and Lasoona is implementing the project in Swat district.

The peer review exercise looked at the selection of working areas and found that the targeting of the project activities was appropriate, as the communities were conflict affected and had experienced a loss of livelihood and damage to community infrastructure as a result of the conflict and resulting displacement. Area selection and project implementation appeared to have taken place in coordination with local government and other humanitarian actors. The review found that committees had been formed in a consultative way through Broad Based Community Meetings (BBCMs) and were largely considered to be representative of various groups within the community.

While the number of eligible potential beneficiaries far exceeded the scale of the project, beneficiary selection was carried out by the committee members, and verification by NGOs was underway. Most men and women participating in the CFW schemes understood the selection criteria; however some women's groups showed limited understanding of the project and the selection criteria. A key recommendation was that more community briefing was needed, supported by publicly displayed information about the project. Information to beneficiaries also needs to clarify their rights and entitlements, expectations of outputs, and what will happen to tools and products after the project implementation period. Complaints mechanisms have been put in place through the provision of phone numbers of NGO staff; however these were mainly with the men and it was unclear how women would access NGO staff if needed.

The selection of the most vulnerable women was hampered by the limited scope of the CFW schemes for women, all of which required existing skills in embroidery or handicrafts, rather than being based on their vulnerability. In this sense, schemes for women could be broadened to allow for more inclusive selection, and also for schemes which further women's strategic needs, such as literacy classes, or more profitable skills such as tailoring. The concept of CFW received a very positive response from women, many of whom have never received any remuneration for their labour. Schemes for men were largely appropriate in terms of addressing community needs for infrastructure damaged by conflict, however at times there had been a lack of appropriate tools provided in a timely manner to men. There also needs to be thorough technical and social feasibility studies of the schemes to ensure that they are sustainable and benefitting the maximum number of households, and not just the most powerful land owners. To avoid duplication and ensure sustainability and ongoing maintenance, the relevant local government department needs to be involved from the beginning in the planning process for infrastructure, and the Social Welfare Department (SWD) could also be linked to the women's committees.

Distribution of payment had not yet started at the time of the review; however beneficiaries largely were aware that the modality of payment would be through cheque. While for some women this presented a challenge, others were enthusiastic about going to the bank and collecting their payment. It will also be important for partners to conduct post distribution monitoring to identify the impact of the project on food security, and on women's practical and strategic needs. There is also a need to have further discussions about possible activities which can be undertaken to build on this project in the future.

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I. Introduction

Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly known as North West Frontier Province) is faced with the challenge of resettling Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) due to the conflict between the invading Taliban and the Pakistan security forces. As well as facilitating the resettlement of displaced populations, a key priority is to provide emergency livelihood recovery to support conflict-affected households in regaining their normal lives. The IDPs from Swat, Buner, Lower and Upper Dir have gradually returned back to their villages but many now face the challenge of recovering their livelihoods.

The findings from the baseline survey that Oxfam Great Britain (OGB) carried out in October 2009 indicate that harshly affected areas lack humanitarian support. The Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF) and UN-led Conflict Early Recovery Initiated Need Assessment (CERINA), July to August 2009, highlighted that, "returning households have incurred high expenses due to the displacement and have an urgent need for cash, particularly in the face of price inflation due to the limited functioning of local markets (exacerbated by curfews and road blockages). Savings and assets (including 70% of all livestock) have largely been depleted and 60% of the population depend on agriculture and livestock". The findings indicate that there are very limited opportunities to earn a daily wage, with most tenants previously dependent on agricultural wage labour from the landlords, which is yet to be revived. For women living in the area, paid employment is extremely difficult to obtain, largely due to strict cultural norms which constrain women's mobility and limit their ability to work outside the home. Few women do paid work from within the home, such as tailoring. The findings also indicate that basic community infrastructures, e.g. roads, irrigation channels, water supply schemes and bridal paths were damaged during the time of displacement, as were schools and other essential services.

Considering the context described above, OGB proposed to work in the Emergency Food Security and Livelihoods (EFSL) sector, in order to complement the agency's ongoing Water, Sanitation and Health (WASH) and Livelihood Early Recovery activities supported by UNICEF, DFID, ECHO and OFDA. This initiative, funded by AusAID, is a scale up of the Cash for Work (CFW) activities in new return areas that are still lacking assistance. The scale up of CFW activities provides an opportunity to continue building the local capacity of partners and beneficiaries in monitoring their projects as they take ownership and action in the recovery initiative. The local partners will also be required to monitor and report on activity progress.

This Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) exercise was conducted towards the start of the project so that issues could be identified early on and adjustments can be made to the project implementation based on the recommendations of this exercise. The MEL team consisted of OGB and Oxfam Australia (OAU) staff and the staff of the two partner organisations Rural Development Project (RDP) and Lasoona. RDP is implementing the project in Buner district and Lasoona is implementing the project in Swat district.

II. Project Overview

Title: Livelihood early recovery in Upper Swat and Burner Districts, Pakistan

Beneficiaries: 4,750 households (approx. 38,000 individuals)

Geographical coverage: 5 Union Councils (UCs) in the Districts of Swat (Kishawara, Manglawar, Teligram, Kopanai and Kotanai) and Buner (Norizai, Sori, Rega, Abakhel and Pacha)

Project Duration: 8 months

Budget: AUD \$1,945,000

Objective: To increase household income and expenditure for 4,750 conflict-affected households through Cash for Work to meet basic needs and rehabilitate community infrastructure

Outcomes:

1. improved daily food intake for 4,750 vulnerable conflict affected households through provision of 4 months cash transfer through CFW activities;
2. at least 25% of CFW beneficiaries employed are women and have increased purchasing power and;
3. at least 16 key community infrastructures are rehabilitated through CFW project schemes improving service delivery.

III. Approach

The approach taken for the mid-term review was a peer-to-peer learning process, where staff from the two partners, Lasoona and RDP, were involved in reviewing each other's program areas along with the OGB and OAU staff members.

The evaluation process has been documented in more detail in 'Appendix 1 – Process and Reflections'. This particular peer review methodology was chosen as it allows for a great deal of input from the communities that we seek to benefit, it relies upon and utilises trust between and within participating organisations, and allows for staff members of partner organisations to participate and learn from a process of reflecting on their own, and each other's, programs. The method used was informal, flexible and conducted in a spirit of open enquiry.

The first day of the learning review process consisted of a start-up session. The partners made presentations about the project to establish what has been achieved to date. OAU, OGB and partner staff then worked collaboratively to identify the key areas for reflection. Given the early stage of project implementation, these areas focused on activities and processes. This was an extremely useful exercise for ensuring that the team were working from a common set of mutually agreed key areas for analysis.

Two teams were formed to work in Buner and Swat districts¹. For peer review, a few staff members of RDP were part of the team that worked in Lasoona's working area of Swat and similarly, a few staff members of Lasoona were part of team that worked in RDP's working areas in Buner. Some of the Lasoona and RDP staff remained in the team that worked in their respective operational areas in order to facilitate the review team due to their familiarity with the area, local stakeholders and beneficiaries.

¹ Swat and Buner are 3 hours apart as the road runs through hilly terrain.

Each of the two teams was further divided into two sub-teams so that they could work in two different villages at the same time in one district. Within each village separate discussions were held in men's and women's groups, due to cultural norms, effectively dividing the teams again.

The two teams then spent two days conducting semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions in Buner and Swat districts. Each day, the sub-teams focused on discussion with communities to gather detailed information with regard to the various aspects of the project identified during the start-up session. The line of questioning tried to unearth evidence to ascertain the degree to which processes had been followed to ensure success in each area of implementation. Meetings with the Head of OCHA, Swat district and the Assistant Coordination Officer (ACO) of Buner were also conducted. At the close of each day the members within each sub-team shared their findings with the whole team.

The data gathered during the field enquiry was then examined in a participatory workshop attended by the entire review team. In discussing the findings against each of the key areas, the information from the field was triangulated with the knowledge of the staff. Based on the findings, a set of recommendations were developed by the participants.

IV. Findings and Recommendations

ACTIVITY	EVIDENCE SOUGHT	EVIDENCE FOUND	RECOMMENDATIONS
Area Selection and Committee Formation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with district Government • Participation of all stakeholders (men, women, Government) in communities – including women's organisations • Consultation with other organisations in the area – avoiding duplication, improving coordination • Criteria development for selection of villages • Feedback mechanisms • Mapping of existing structures in communities • Sensitivity to conflict • Information sharing with communities about the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Buner, area selection was conducted in coordination with the District Government. In Swat, the areas were also selected in consultation with the District Government. • Discussion with the Head of OCHA in Swat district indicated that OGB were involved in cluster meetings and undertaking close coordination with all agencies to avoid duplication of activities however he did not have specific knowledge of this project and was not involved in area selection. • Since there are few other organisations working in the implementation areas, there was little chance for duplication of activities. • Women's organisations didn't exist in the project areas. • In Buner, all of the villages selected were affected by conflict directly, with the majority of residents being displaced and then returning home. In Swat, one village was not directly affected by the conflict, although people had experienced some negative impacts on their livelihoods. • In both districts, committees were formed after holding Broad Based Community Meetings (BBCMs). It was felt that these meetings were largely free of political bias and were open and transparent. A participatory process was followed for the selection of committee members. In many villages, beneficiaries were represented on the committees. • The feedback was largely positive in terms of the inclusion of different groups within the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiaries should be included in village committees in order to strengthen the link between the people who are directly benefiting from the project and the ones who are facilitating the process. This will also help in wide transmission of information to different sections of the community. • Communication channels between beneficiaries and committees require strengthening to improve the flow of information. • People from all sections of society should be included in the village committees to make them more representative and acceptable within the broader communities. • Community meetings should be held in neutral places to encourage broader participation. The meetings should not always be held in one place, but should be rotated to different places within the village to encourage greater participation by communities and wide information sharing. • More concerted efforts are required to strengthen communication from NGOs to women regarding the program and its objectives. This will help to raise awareness among women about interventions being launched by local

ACTIVITY	EVIDENCE SOUGHT	EVIDENCE FOUND	RECOMMENDATIONS
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While BBCMs were held, there were some concerns around the flow of information to the larger population in the villages, including women, who cannot attend public meetings. Another area for investigation was to find out if committees are representative of the whole village or not. The number of households that participated in BBCMs is low in comparison to the total number of households in the village, for instance, 20% participation was estimated in one village. In the same manner, there is a question around village committees comprising of 25 members being representative of a village that comprise of 600 households. Generally, men's committees were more established than women's committees. First contact was made with men who facilitated the formation of women's committees in the villages. In Buner, it was the first time women were interacting with an NGO and participating in such a project. Therefore, women were not entirely clear about the role of NGO's and committees. It also meant that there was quite a bit of scepticism about outsiders and development projects in general. 	<p>NGOs or OGB and promote their engagement with the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects should be used as opportunities to raise the awareness of women about collective organising and the benefits of village committees. Similarly, women can learn how to raise their voices and communicate their rights to the concerned authorities.
Beneficiary Selection and Verification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection criteria for men and women beneficiaries (disability, widows, skill, loss of family members due to conflict, chronic sickness, elderly, unaccompanied children, large family size of more than 8, landless, minorities, loss to material assets / livelihood assets due to conflict/livelihood means) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In all areas the number of eligible beneficiaries (landless and un/under-employed) far exceeded the capacity of the project to incorporate them, meaning that a selection process was necessary. In the majority of areas reviewed, the Committee members had undertaken the selection of beneficiaries through a process of BBCMs. Beneficiary lists were then being verified by the partner organisation and OGB. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about the project could be publicly displayed in the community to create better understanding and transparency about the project activities, for instance, criteria for selection of beneficiaries, entitlements of beneficiaries, list of beneficiaries. This information should be in local language and should also reach women through

ACTIVITY	EVIDENCE SOUGHT	EVIDENCE FOUND	RECOMMENDATIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community ownership / participation / understanding of selection criteria • Scope for feedback and revision • Endorsement by women's organisations • Ways and means to shortlist / verify the number of beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some areas verification had taken place, with some complaints received that verification was not thorough enough. In other areas verification was ongoing. • Among men's groups, there was mostly a good understanding that the beneficiary selection was based on those most "poor and needy". While community members were able to link the selected beneficiaries to the criteria, it was unclear to what extent they were involved in the development of the criteria. • Among some women's groups however, there was the perception that handicrafts skills were the key selection criteria. Partner organisations and OGB staff offered differing explanations as to how important this criteria was. Some community women also felt that due to this, very young women and elderly women had been excluded from the scheme, as well as those less skilled. • Other women's groups were very clear that the selection criteria was used to identify the most vulnerable and could list the selection criteria. They agreed with and endorsed the selection criteria although they did not develop the criteria themselves. • Women were positive about being selected for the project, particularly as materials are being provided to them as well as cash, and for many UCs it was the first time any project or NGO has worked with women in the area. 	<p>other means, such as radio.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of labour cards and cash distribution cards to beneficiaries could be used to properly identify beneficiaries under the CFW program and ensure transparency. • More diverse CFW options could be explored for women – including mud brick making, homestead gardening, pickling etc which could allow for semi skilled and unskilled women to be selected for the project based on their vulnerability. Skilled women could also be partnering with unskilled women for skills transfer.
Identification and feasibility of schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of the identified schemes (communal – benefiting maximum HH / effective, participative, productivity, need based, schemes within the scope of the project) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village committees have identified and selected the schemes to be implemented through CFW. • Communities in most of the villages are aware of the criteria for the selection of schemes. Most of these are conflict or flood affected, such as non-operational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that a thorough social and technical assessment is done for identified and selected schemes to ensure that they benefit the maximum households and most vulnerable in the

ACTIVITY	EVIDENCE SOUGHT	EVIDENCE FOUND	RECOMMENDATIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationship of selected schemes to conflict Gender appropriate schemes for the context Technical and social viability of selected / identified schemes (technical know how, manpower availability, tools, risks associated, sustainability, skills based design and implementation level) Consultation / linking with the relevant Government agencies to avoid duplication 	<p>roads and irrigation channels. These projects benefit large numbers of people including surrounding villages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One area requiring further exploration is an analysis of who is benefiting most from the schemes. Will it be the already wealthy landlords who will further exert their influence after the completion of schemes? For example, rehabilitated irrigation channels could result primarily in benefits for landlords. The technical assessment will be done by relevant partner staff and they will also provide the ongoing support required during the implementation of the project. Women's projects are entirely traditional handicrafts such as knitting and embroidery and no other options were considered. Women expressed their interest for education facilities in their villages, which could be potentially linked to CFW activities. They also expressed an interest to learn sewing, with some women already having tailoring skills. In spite of this, women stated that they are happy with the selected projects since they are culturally and religiously acceptable. They were also pleased to gather as a group since it provides them with an opportunity to share information and relate to each other. It was the first time for most of the women to get paid for any work they perform. Men were mostly cooperative and offered to facilitate women in selling their products in the market. Men also knew about the details of women's CFW schemes. 	<p>communities. This will ensure smooth project implementation, increased social cohesion and achievement of greater sustainability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build in mechanisms for maintenance and sustainability after the project duration in coordination and consultation with other stakeholders especially Government and communities. The relevant Government line department should be involved from the beginning by being informed about the details of the schemes and their possible participation in the implementation, monitoring, operation and maintenance. Further, other relevant Government departments like the Social Welfare Department (SWD) can be involved and linked to women committees. CFW schemes for women should be broadened to include not only those that rely upon existing skills and reinforce women's roles, but also other activities which could still be done within the household compound, but which also advance women's strategic interests, such as literacy classes. Other CFW activities for women could include tailoring classes, pickling, making mud bricks or literacy classes.
Preparing for start-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Composition and relevance of tool kit with identified project (community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In some schemes there had been a delay in receiving the necessary tools to commence the project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of tool kits should be expedited for the schemes that are

ACTIVITY	EVIDENCE SOUGHT	EVIDENCE FOUND	RECOMMENDATIONS
(Allocation of beneficiaries to schemes, procurement of tools, measurements, trainings)	<p>involvement)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of procurement of tools • Transparent, accountable, decentralize system to procure tools • Matching of schemes with beneficiaries (geographical, skill based) • Options of marketing for products • Provision and distribution of material and tools • Information sharing about completed layout of schemes (cash, number of days, mode of payment, role of beneficiaries, back up support training) • Orientation of staff about the project and their role 	<p>Community members had commenced work using their own tools and were sometimes told that the tools would only be provided if their own tools broke.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some schemes the toolkit was not adequate for the scheme – e.g. in the road repair schemes they had not received wheel barrows. • There was some discussion about the lack of safety equipment such as gumboots or first aid kits, however there was no budgetary provision made for these and it was deemed unfeasible. • Men were clear on the number of days they were required to work, the daily wage, the duration of the project and the mode of payment. In some cases the communities had reconfigured the modalities of working (e.g. number of days per week etc) to suit their local context. Men were not clear on what will happen with the tools after the conclusion of the project. • In Buner, women were largely unclear on the details of the project – number of days, wages, duration etc. Women did know that they would receive materials for embroidery, but were unsure if/ how their products would be marketed and sold. • In Swat women were mostly clear on the project details, however given the scheme work hadn't yet started some women were unsure of how many pieces they were required to produce per week/month to be entitled to their wage. • Partner staff had been oriented about the project; however there remained some discrepancies in different people's understanding of some of the functioning of the schemes – such as what would happen to the tools, what would happen to women's 	<p>ready to be implemented in order for the CFW program to start without any further delay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beneficiaries should be clear about what will happen to the tools and materials that will be used in CFW program after the schemes are completed. • Women beneficiaries need further briefing on the project details to be clear on what is expected of them, number of working days, wages, material provision etc, particularly in Buner. • Ensure that beneficiaries are clear about their rights during the CFW schemes. For instance, what will happen to the compensation in case they fell sick during the implementation of schemes? • Provision of first aid can be explored through identifying any community members with medical skills/knowledge and ensuring that community members are clear on how/where to access medical treatment in the event of an accident. Safety equipment can be considered in future budgets if needed. Basic first aid supplies – antiseptic and bandages - should be made available nearby the worksite.

ACTIVITY	EVIDENCE SOUGHT	EVIDENCE FOUND	RECOMMENDATIONS
Implementation of CFW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation of CFW (attendance sheets, detailed scheme information, verification by partner and village committee) maintained by supervisor and verified by OGB staff Collection of finished products from women Sustainability of CFW as an ongoing IGA 	<p>handicrafts beyond the project duration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In Swat CFW scheme implementation had not yet started at the time of the review. In Buner a few CFW schemes were underway. The attendance sheet is being maintained by the supervisor. It contains beneficiary names and Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) numbers of the beneficiaries. The Committee and community have signed 'Terms of Partnership' (ToP) for the implementation of CFW schemes. In cases of schemes such as road construction, the Committee has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with land owners to avoid any dispute. A complaints mechanism is in place as the contact phone numbers of partner staff are with communities, however, mainly with the men. More work on complaints mechanisms is required, especially for women who do not know how to contact partner / OGB staff if they have any reservations or issues with the project. Some women said they had access to a mobile phone and know how to use it, but they did not have the phone numbers of partner / OGB staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Display banners should be hung in central locations in villages to provide information about the project. The banners can include contact phone numbers of partner / OGB staff for anonymous complaints. Banners should be low profile with no OGB logo. Ensure that women have contact phone numbers of relevant partner / OGB staff for complaints and communicating other issues related to the project. Existing formats and mechanisms developed for CFW schemes should be shared between two partners for time saving, consistency and efficiency. For instance RDP has already developed a format for the cheque distribution register that can be shared with Lasoona.
Cash Distribution Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verification of the completed / agreed work in timely manner Timely distribution of funds from OGB to partners / Timely completion of necessary documents by partners for submission to OGB Opening joint bank account Accountable joint processes Actual distribution of cheques to beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Men and women were mostly aware that they will receive payment through cheques. The listing of CFW beneficiaries will be done by listing their names and national identification card numbers. CFW beneficiaries will be supervised by the partner NGOs and their work will be verified on daily basis. The cheques will be distributed after verifying the details of beneficiaries by looking at the number of days they have worked. Some women expressed concern about going to the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGO's need to support women to ensure that they are maintaining control over their own funds as much as possible. This means issuing cheques (as OGB cannot give out cash) in women's names (to honour the work they have done) and to try to support them to access banks. This may be done through providing transport, or arranging women to go as a group.

ACTIVITY	EVIDENCE SOUGHT	EVIDENCE FOUND	RECOMMENDATIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signing of cheque distribution register by beneficiaries • Verification by community committee for cheque distribution • Reconciliation of cheque distribution register with bank statement 	<p>bank themselves to cash their cheques, due to their restricted mobility. Other women expressed enthusiasm about the prospect of receiving cheques in their own names and going to the bank themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women said they would use the money earned through CFW themselves and that men would not make decisions on how the money was spent. Most women wanted to spend their money on their daughters' education and to invest in further raw materials so they can continue to earn an income 	
MEAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline survey • Community's awareness about indicators / activities • Monitoring by the Government agencies • Operation and maintenance by the community organisation • Development an understanding about relevant report and monitoring framework • Grievance mechanism / complaints and response mechanism • Technical progress monitoring / Calculation of work done (technical) • Field level monitoring by the partners • Spot checking of cheque distribution • Post distribution monitoring • Collection of quotes, case studies, photos and periodic reporting • Coordination meetings between partners and OGB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline surveys in Buner and Swat districts have been conducted by partners. • Although baselines have been conducted, female beneficiaries were unaware why they were asked the questions and did not have a clear idea about the project indicators. • Though men did not articulate the indicators of the project, they are informed that the project will help them to improve daily food intake and will provide food security in the shorter term. • Complaints mechanisms are weak, especially for women, as discussed above. • Only a few schemes had started in Buner district at the time of the review. The partner organisation is organising visits of Government agencies to the project areas so that they are informed and are able to appreciate the impact of the project activities. . • There is a need to conduct post-distribution monitoring of cash usage and to monitor the impact of women's earning on decision making at the household and community levels. • Partners and OGB are planning to conduct joint 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further sensitisation of communities, particularly women, on the project indicators is required. • Grievance mechanisms should be strengthened as identified earlier. • Government agencies should be facilitated by partner / OGB staff to visit schemes and take technical measurements for verification of work completed. • Ensure cheque post distribution monitoring takes place using a standard monitoring format to identify the impact of the project on women's basic and strategic needs and ensure this is reported on accordingly. • Further discussions should be had regarding possible activities that can be built on under this project. For example, vocational training for women to increase their skills and future earning opportunities.

ACTIVITY	EVIDENCE SOUGHT	EVIDENCE FOUND	RECOMMENDATIONS
		monthly reviews of the project for mutual learning and experience sharing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint reviews should be done on a regular basis by OGB and partners throughout the project. This will facilitate the sharing of information and learning of the project.
Stakeholders Linkages and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation and sharing of information about the project in the coordination meeting at the district level Linking and meetings with relevant Government line departments / Tehsil level coordination with administration/ community restoration cluster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The OCHA representative in Swat informed us that coordination among INGOs in the district is effective, especially with OGB. OGB actively participates and shares quality information with other organisations. The Assistant Coordination Officer (ACO) was positive about RDP's work in Buner district. They regularly share information and ensure coordination. Evidence of this was that RDP had changed its selection of UC's based on coordination with local government. While there is no government CFW intervention, there are infrastructure works being carried out by government, which may overlap with CFW activities. Monthly coordination meetings are held and attended by partner and OGB staff. Proposals for different schemes are submitted to relevant line agencies by RDP and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) for their review and for obtaining a No Objection Certificate (NOC). Local government is of the view that IDPs still require support from outside agencies due to the existence of huge need in the area and are concerned about the reallocation of resources to the flood response in the South. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oxfam and partners can collect and strengthen information about other issues existing in the operational areas. Resolution of these issues can be advocated to the local Government to increase community capacity to hold government agencies to account. Information and documents related to projects / schemes should be shared with District Coordination Officers (DCOs), cluster working groups and other relevant Government departments for greater ownership and sustainability. Project review and joint planning sessions should be organised to be attended by both partners and Oxfam, including finance, logistics and other units for learning and sharing across the board.

V. Key Learnings

1. **Identifying Need:** The project design and targeting is appropriate and based on identified needs within communities. The appropriateness of choosing to work with IDPs in Swat and Buner has been endorsed by local government in Buner District. There is good community appreciation of the project and the level of community participation is high. Coordination with local government and other humanitarian agencies appears to be high.
2. **Operational Modalities:** The operational modalities of a project should be agreed upon and documented prior to beginning the project. All OGB and partner staff should be briefed on the modalities to develop a common understanding and to ensure full and correct information is passed on to communities.
3. **Designing CFW for Women:** To ensure participation of the most vulnerable, more CFW schemes for women need to be explored, as currently only women skilled in handicrafts are included in the project. Women are enthusiastic about their participation in the project which presents an opportunity to build upon. The project could be a key entry point for raising women's awareness on social organisation, vocational skills training, increasing mobility (ie through banking cheques), facilitating women's economic and social empowerment and supporting women to become more actively engaged in their communities.
4. **Assessment of Schemes:** Thorough technical and social feasibility assessments of CFW schemes need to be carried out prior to commencement to ensure that the scheme is sustainable in its design and that it is going to benefit the community at large, rather than primarily benefitting the elite. Scheme technical feasibility also needs to analyse whether all the necessary tools can be purchased and provided within the project budget.
5. **Community Briefings:** Extensive community briefings are required prior to beginning a new project to ensure communities are aware of the aim, objectives and indicators of the project along with the operational modalities. This is particularly crucial in working areas where there has not previously been NGO presence, and there can be a great deal of scepticism and misconceptions about NGOs and their activities.
6. **Information Sharing:** Information should be shared with community members using a variety of methods – signboards, fliers, Broad Based Community Meetings and smaller meetings for different groups. Techniques to ensure women's understanding and involvement in project design and implementation must be incorporated.
7. **Joint Programming:** Lasoona and RDP have been sharing information about the project and participated together in this midterm review. OGB has also been facilitating this joint program implementation through monthly coordination meetings with both partners.
8. **Sustainability of EFSL:** A key question arising from such a short-term CFW project is around sustainability and how this EFSL program can be linked to more long term development programming. This is a question for both Oxfam and partners. To ensure the maximum impact from the CFW scheme, it is important to use the MEL findings in the post-distribution stage to design future programs in these affected communities.

VI. Annex I

Process and Reflections

STAGE 1: Start-up

1.1 Selection of field sites – this was done on the first day of the learning review by participants led by partners. The criteria kept in view while selection of villages for visit included security situation, access, and diverse coverage within a short time. OGB and partners arranged all the logistics to ensure that the two teams are well placed in Buner and Swat districts and subsequently the sub-teams have appropriate logistics to visit villages. It was ensured that women were represented in each team, although not in equal numbers.

1.2 Initial start-up session – The objectives of the learning review visit was shared with the partners and OGB in detail during an earlier visit by OAU staff. Hence, the participants knew about this exercise. The participants worked together to identify the key areas for analysis during the learning review. The key areas were further defined to create common understanding among the participants. It was a useful session whereby the participants discussed and clarified the aspects of the project to look into during the field visit.

STAGE 2: Field Enquiry

1.3 Field visits – Two sub-teams visited different villages within one district. Composition of teams and sub-teams was mixed to ensure that they have OAU, OGB and partners staff. The presence of partner staff working in the same district was necessary in teams and sub-teams keeping in view their familiarity with the area, community and security situation. Most of the discussions were held in Pashto (local language) translated by local partner and OGB staff working in the area. The discussions with both women and men were held in groups keeping in view the key areas identified for analysis.

STAGE 3: Impact Assessment Workshop

1.4 Final workshop: The information collected during the field visits was examined in a participatory workshop attended by the learning review team. The purpose of the final workshop session was to discuss the findings and to come up with a set of recommendations for either changes or emphasis needed in the project over the remaining period.

Initially, the participants shared their analysis with respect to identified key areas for Swat and Buner that was listed on flip charts. Discussions were held to explain and debate on issues identified during the field visits. After this, the participants brainstormed to come up with recommendations for each of the key area to be considered in the current and future phases of the project.

Reflecting on process:

Positive Feedback on methodology – Participants gave positive feedback on the methodology and spirit of conducting the learning review. Joint planning and analysis helped to increase understanding of issues and developing the way forward.

Ownership of the Process – The whole exercise was carried out in high spirit with trust. Participants owned the process as they were involved from the start to set up the process and methodology for conducting the analysis.

Logistical organisation – OGB and partner staff did an excellent job of organising the logistics of the visit keeping in view the number of projects being implemented for IDPs and flood response and the security situation in the area.

Involvement of communities – It is strength of this process that it draws upon the knowledge and experiences of community members, rather than just program staff. Both

women and men in the communities participated actively in responding to queries and sharing their opinion about the project.

Selection of sites – Due to our limited time for field enquiry (2 days) and the security situation, the sites chosen were close to offices at the district level. Another standard security procedure followed was to return from the field by 3pm.

Organisation of Teams for Field Visit – For the peer-to-peer evaluation process to work effectively, those staff working on the program component being evaluated ideally should not be involved or even present during the focus group discussions at their field site. Instead, the evaluation team and staff from other program components should conduct the discussions independently and later triangulate with the staff working on that program. This is with the intention of eliciting open responses, without input or influence from program staff who have intimate knowledge of the program. However, in this learning review, it was recognized that introductions or a degree of facilitation by familiar program staff will elicit more trust and responsiveness from community participants and provide for richer discussion. However, it was aimed to minimise the input from program staff during field enquiry, allowing their peers and outside evaluators to lead the discussion, whilst relying on the program staff for introductions, hosting the field enquiry and for translations where necessary.

Timeframe of learning review – The discussions held on the final day were very enriching and informative for all the participants. A number of issues arose and solid recommendations were put forward. It would have been advantageous to spend an additional 1-2 days in the field. At the same time, the CFW schemes had not started in many areas. Conducting the learning review during the time of implementation of CFW schemes would have generated more analysis and discussions. At the same time, the earlier review has provided aspects to ponder on before the actual implementation of CFW schemes have started.

VII. Annex II

Field Plan and Team Composition

SWAT	BUNER
<p>Sub-Group 1 Tuesday - Going to Marpetai (Kotnai) Meeting in community at 1030 Wednesday – Going to Koz Manglawar (Manglawar) Meeting in community at 0900 Farooq Rume Sami Neelum</p> <p>Sub-Group 2 Tuesday - Going to Asala (Kotnai) Meeting in community at 1030 Wednesday – Going to Bar Manglawar (Manglawar) Meeting in community at 0900 Tania Wisal Shumaila Rizwan</p>	<p>Sub-Group 3 Tuesday - Going to Malakpur (Malakpur) Meeting in community at 1030 Wednesday – Going to Takhtaband(Rega) Meeting in community at 1100 Furqan Shazia Murad Shabana Irfan Malik</p> <p>Sub-Group4 Tuesday - Going to Khalabut (Pacha) Wednesday – Going to Rega (Rega) Meeting in community at 1030 Angela Iqbal Anila Amjad Ahsan</p>