Picture Power: Community perceptions of power in the occupied Palestinian territory

Part of Christian Aid's 2015 impact assessment on governance programming

The grandmothers and aunt of Ferial Gname, Amuria

Executive Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to compliment a wider set of assessments looking at Christian Aid's governance and accountability practices. It used a participatory photography methodology to understand community perceptions of change as part of the PPA programme in occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), across the four areas of power: With, Within, To and Over. The accountability benchmarks of participation, information sharing and feedback mechanisms appeared to have contributed to positive changes in these areas of power. Ultimately, this helps us to understand from a community perspective some of the ways in which our accountability approach (PVCA and HAP specifically) has supported change.

Power Within

Individuals in every community reported shifts in power. Women frequently reported **positive changes through having greater participation** in the community, having a **stronger voice** and greater **capacity to address the risks** they faced. Men valued different changes to the women, **citing the freedoms** they had gained as a result of project work.

Power With

Communities felt more empowered to hold other organisations and local authorities to account and demand their rights. They had taken actions to **gain control over how projects were implemented** and leveraged resources to address their action plans, largely through better **understanding of their rights**. This was largely linked to better information sharing and the formation of community groups. Communities felt that there had been comparatively little or no change in relations with Israeli actors and expressed frustration at not having been able to work with other Palestinian communities.

Power To

A strengthened collective ability to prepare for and address challenges and manage risks was highlighted in each community. Despite the overarching theme of powerlessness in relation to tackling the occupation, there was still **hope and confidence that the *effects* of the occupation could be addressed** through the work that was being carried out. There was **pride in what had been achieved so far** and a feeling that each community had more options to help achieve change than in the past.

Power Over

The ability to challenge power over, to face the occupation and be able to assume control over resources represented the limitations of what had been achieved through PVCA and action plan development. **The spaces of power dominated by the occupation, in the form of settlers or soldiers, had not changed.** This was crucial in understanding why changes in the other areas of power were regarded as so important for communities, **allowing them to break down and address the effects of the occupation.**

Observations

Some observations were also made that included understanding the importance of trust in relationships between partners and communities, and the need to build in accountable practices from the earliest opportunity. Revisiting power analysis should be considered, as in other Christian Aid programmes, implementing complaints mechanisms still remains a challenge. Partners also reflected on working with Christian Aid and some ideas for improving work in the future.

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Overview

Governance and accountability

This assessment is part of a wider corporate impact study at Christian Aid that includes five country studies, using different evaluative approaches to understand and document a range of different governance programmes. These country studies are serving multiple audiences. They are intended to deepen our understanding of programme practice and be useful for sharing across our country programmes, as well as to help identify ways in which our public policy and advocacy work regionally, globally and in the UK can better build on and respond to programme experience and learning and communicate our work to external stakeholders.

Purpose

Overall purpose

1. To explore from a community perspective the extent to which approaches that embed accountable practices (PVCA and HAP) support communities to use community level mechanisms to improve accountability on participation, information sharing and feedback;
2. To explore the whether this empowers (or not) communities to call for more accountable practices from other actors in OPT.

Additionally, to understand community perceptions of any changes relating to:

- Whether marginalised groups, particularly women and youth, feel that the project has been implemented in a way that ensures their voice is better heard;
- Whether partners/community groups have changed the way the project is implemented as a result of feedback received;
- Are community members, collectively and individually, empowered to hold each other, donors, partners and authorities to account?

Background

Christian Aid's goal is to empower people to live with dignity, able to respond successfully to disasters, risks and opportunities. There are different types of risk, and building resilience supports individuals' and communities' capacity to anticipate, organise for and adapt to change. Christian Aid secured strategic funding in 2011 to work on disaster-facing risk reduction across nine countries, including occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), as part of the DFID-funded Conflict, Humanitarian, Security and Justice PPA (commonly referred to as the CHASE PPA). A participatory DRR approach to building resilience that prioritises community participation, advocacy and accountability has been implemented, adapted and improved during this time.

CHASE PPA work is targeted at community level, in this case meaning a group of people who share a geographic location. There are limitations to this, since no one community is a homogenous entity and there are complex power relations within. Resilience work is targeted at community level but builds the individual and collective management of risk and the ability to shift or change power relations within the community and with external actors. The management of risk is applicable both in the traditional sense of natural hazards, but also in terms of conflict risk, although this usually

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manifests as mitigating the effects of conflict rather, than addressing conflict itself, which is often beyond the scope of a community [1].

This approach to resilience is also reflective of Christian Aid's partnership approach, which seeks to 'add value to local change processes', although this is not something that is systematically captured across Christian Aid's work[2]. Achieving Big, Deep and Lasting change involves fundamentally challenging power at every level on a sustainable basis. Values of accountability, transparency and trust are just as fundamental to quality partnership as they are to quality implementation. It is only through partnerships developed with these values that we are able to add value to local change processes, meaning our partnership approach is as much about how we work in partnership as who we partnership with.

The situation in OPT has necessitated a strong, reflexive approach to working in a difficult environment, where DRR has not traditionally been considered suitable due to a constantly changing situation and the risks attached to working in an area of conflict. Despite this, the PPA has successfully supported communities to identify, prioritise and address the risks they face, building resilience as they do so, through the use of PVCAs and community-led work, as evidenced by previous assessments. During this time, the idea of risk as defined by communities has widened to incorporate not only natural and conflict hazards, but also social issues such as unemployment and (lack of access to?) education.

OPT Resilient Livelihoods Programme

Christian Aid has been working in occupied Palestinian territory since 1948, and has a long history of funding programmes aimed at reducing poverty through a rights-based approach in the region. The Resilient Livelihoods Programme supports vulnerable and marginalised rural communities and groups to achieve thriving resilient livelihoods in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Unlike in many country programmes, there is no country office in OPT. In many other country programmes, Christian Aid staff will also have a relationship with communities, whereas this is not the case to the same extent in OPT. The partners implementing the CHASE PPA are the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Palestinian Agricultural Development Association (PARC). They work in communities across the Jordan Valley and Bethlehem and Nablus governorates. They received funding for this work since 2011 and have scaled up from working in three communities initially to a total of 9 communities each since 2014. The communities vary in size 200 people or less to areas with over 3,000 people.

CHSJ PPA and Accountability

The study focused on work in the West Bank where PARC and YMCA have purposefully adopted Humanitarian Accountability Principles (HAP) and Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (PVCAs) in designing and implementing their projects at a community level. These embed the key benchmarks of accountability (participation, information sharing and feedback mechanisms) in a way that empowers communities to more effectively engage with other actors (such as INGOs, NGOs and local government structures), to hold them to account and demand their rights/leverage additional resources. The Theory of Change for the Middle East PPA programme hypothesises, in relation to accountability, that:

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[1] [Building resilience and managing risk in fragile and conflict-affected areas, 2014](#)
[2] [Value for People: On the added value of Christian Aid's partnership approach, 2015](#)

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*If we give HAP training and accompaniment to communities, project partners to improve understanding of accountability practice… **Then** partners will establish and communities will use community level mechanisms to improve accountability on information sharing, participation and complaints handling; **As a result**, partners manage and modify accountability mechanisms in response to how they are used. <u>**Communities are empowered; reporting more accountability with donors, partners and authorities, and the quality of programmes improves.**</u>*

Accountability is not limited to the key benchmarks of participation, information sharing and complaints mechanisms, but these speak to a broader definition that encompasses the quality of relationship and issues of trust and power. The principles of this approach to accountability are part of the wider Christian Aid TOC for Resilience and have formed the basis of CHASE PPA programming work in Christian Aid for the past five years.

Although the programme operated implicitly within this hypothesis from the onset, it was not articulated explicitly until 2014. There are two strands to the CHASE PPA that promote accountability and address inequitable power structures. The first is a focus on implementing the Humanitarian Accountability Principles (HAP) as a set of minimum standards to be achieved. The second strand is the use of Participatory Vulnerability and Capacity Assessments (PVCA).

HAP

Christian Aid has been HAP certified since 2009. Since then, training around the HAP standards[3] has been widely implemented across Christian Aid (and will continue to be in the future when rebranded as the Core Humanitarian Standards) and with partners. HAP has been a central feature of the CHASE PPA. HAP represents an organisational process rather than a programming approach, in that the standards seek to ensure good practice throughout an organisation rather than solely at programme level, although there has arguably been a greater update of HAP in humanitarian programming to date.

For the purposes of CHASE PPA programme work, HAP training was given to partners and to the relevant Christian Aid staff. In particular, measuring progress against three key benchmarks of HAP has been promoted as evidencing the basis for accountable practice: Participation, Information Sharing and Complaints Response Mechanisms (Annex 1). Evidence of these constitutes evidence of HAP being implemented.

Learning to date has suggested that Complaint Response Mechanisms (CRMs) have proven the most difficult to implement for a variety of reasons, including differentiating between pre-existing informal complaints mechanisms, culturally-specific challenges to the notion of complaints and issues of CRM implementation in conflict settings. PVCAs (see below) specifically address participation and, to an extent, information sharing, both of which have arguably proven easier to implement to date[4].

PVCAs

PVCAs are the second element that guide the participatory approach of the whole CHASE PPA, and across Christian Aid's resilience, DRR and climate change adaptation work. The term PVCA is often used interchangeably to describe both a tool and an approach. While they are primarily a tool, for the purposes of this report they will be referred to in the context of being an approach, therefore

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[3] HAP Quality Standards guidance
[4] CHASE PPA Thematic Learning, 2014/15

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including the action plan and community group organisation that follows the initial PVCA, since this was way in which partners described their use. PVCAs[5] represent an integral part of an organisation-wide approach to participatory risk and capability analysis as part of the project cycle process. As a planning tool, PVCAs enable communities to collectively identify risks, capacities and to develop action plans to address these according to group prioritisation. The process includes context, gender and power analysis and draws in a wide range of community members in an effort to ensure views are representative.

PVCAs are also used as an approach to engage different groups within communities to identify the risks they face. These are then discussed collectively and an action plan drawn up to address the risks prioritised by the community, meaning that the range of risks affecting the wider population should be accounted for. The approach can be applied to communities of different sizes. While PPA funds and the programme scope are relatively small, the PVCA process aims to embed community structures to continue to address risk at different scales through advocacy linked to actions plans. The PVCA process has also been adapted to extrapolate risk from single community action plans to wider areas[6].

In the longer term, community groups (often called Protection Committees in OPT play a key role in the PVCA process). The flexibility of the approach has seen partners work with existing groups, or support the creation of new groups, in part to challenge existing power structures. Understanding context in order to effect change is important, and it is important that the PVCA approach is grounded in power analysis to prevent reinforcing existing inequalities.

Using PVCAs has meant that outcomes around participation have been relatively strong in the CHASE PPA, although several weaknesses have been observed. These include the possibility for community wide action plans to fail to take into account and address marginalised views, the need (not always met) for ongoing power and gender analysis and difficulties in applying the process with shifting populations, such as nomadic communities[1]. It is also important to note that the quality of facilitation is crucial in the PVCA process[7].

Outcomes to date

Outcome Reviews in March 2015 (across the 7 countries currently included in the CHASE PPA) assessed programme outcomes. The reviews broadly found this hypothesis to be supported in each country, although the extent to which this was the case varied. However the reviews also demonstrated additional and therefore less well documented outcomes of the strong PPA focus on accountability: confidence, ownership, community cohesion and empowerment. These are all key changes in power relations but ones that needed further understanding. The 2014/15 OPT CHASE PPA Annual Review[8], found that:

"Overall both partners demonstrated a strong commitment to accountability in their projects, and have achieved a lot through both formal structures as well as informal relationship building ... There are many factors compromising the levels of accountability achieved by these projects, but it is inspiring to see the extent to which they see the project as a means by which improved levels of

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[5] Christian Aid PVCA Guide
[6] See the BRACED BRAPA methodology. BRAPAs are based on the PVCA process but in the BRACED programme a number of community level BRAPAs were used to design climate information services for a wider region.
[7] PPA Year 4 Learning Workshop summary 2015
[8] OPT CHASE PPA Annual Review 2014/15

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accountability can be achieved within the community, and between the community and other stakeholders."

Wider PPA learning also highlighted that the quality of facilitation and interaction is hugely important to outcomes[9], as well as promoting strong accountability. On this basis, it is assumed that focusing on quality implementation should be the first step in driving accountability, through processes such as the PVCA. Processes and frameworks such as HAP should be used to compliment and build on this, rather than the other way around.

Thematic focus: Looking at Power
Christian Aid's overall goal is for all women and men to have the power to end poverty: to become empowered and active, individually and collectively, in changing and challenging the forces, people, structures and systems that dominate their lives. Power underpins any work to achieve accountability: for Christian Aid, for partner organisations, for state institutions or at community and household level. The ability of a community or household (or individual) to participate fully in decision making, or to access information about a project, or hold others to account are all dependent on complex power relations.

These are dynamic and exist between individuals, other community members and with other actors such as NGOs, local authorities or in the case of OPT, Israeli citizens and state. Changes in power, such as individual or collective empowerment, participation or the access to resources, can be assumed to have an impact on accountability. Positive shifts in these areas of power should contribute to communities being able to call for greater accountability from within and from other actors, demand their rights or exercise greater control over the decisions that affect them.

Christian Aid frames power as the ability to create or resist change[10], with four overarching forms: Power Within, Power To, Power With and Power Over. While there is some overlap between these areas, participants looked at changes within these forms of power at a personal level, at community level and more widely. The definitions used in community discussions were:

Power Within
The empowerment and participation of individuals, both at household and community level.

Power With
The ability of communities to hold other actors to account (principally NGOs and local authorities), participate or leading in decision making and leverage resources based on community action plans.

Power To
The ability of communities to collectively act and successfully manage the risks they face.

Power Over
The collective ability to challenge control over rights, services or resources.

Approach

Picture Power
The aim of this project was to use a fully qualitative participatory methodology, Picture Power, to explore issues of accountability from a community perspective (Annex 2). Picture Power is a flexible

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[9] PPA Year 4 Learning Workshop summary 2015
[10] Christian Aid Introduction to Power Analysis

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approach that can be adjusted in terms of time, focus on monitoring or evaluation, subject matter and scope. In this instance, the project was intended to validate wider evidence of PPA work on accountability from a community perspective. Community reporters photographed elements of project work and daily life, documenting what changes they felt had occurred and why. These views were then explored and validated in community focus group discussions to look at these changes and what role, if any, PPA programme work had played.

A total of 14 community reporters participated across four communities. The communities were purposively sampled. Two were 'continuation' communities, having been involved in the PPA programme since 2011 and visited during the 2014/15 Outcome Review, while two were 'new' communities, introduced in April 2014. These included two PARC communities, Qosra (new) and Amuria (continuation) and two YMCA communities, Beit Skariya (continuation) and Jub al-Dhib (new). A further case study was documented in the PARC community of Al Jiftlik (new). Of these, Amuria, Al-Jiftlik and Beit Skariya were visited during the 2014/15 Outcome Review, while PPA partner reporting covered all communities for the same period.

Community members in Jub al-Dhib look at two sets of photographs, one examining Power Within and the other looking at Power With, before a FGD.

The approach allowed a range of individual and community perspectives on accountability and life changes to be drawn out in a participatory manner. The 14 community reporters documented not only the changes they felt had occurred during the project, but also elements of their daily life they considered important. The approach was non-directive at this stage. After a period of time, the reporters then selected the photographs they considered most important and captioned these with stories and descriptions. During this process, themes relating to power were explored, allowing the photographs to be grouped by the reporters according to which of the four areas of power they felt they related to. This meant that for each area of power, there was a selection of project and non-project related photographs.

These pictures were then presented to the wider community and focus group discussions held to validate the photographs and the captions and discuss some of the factors, including PPA work, contributing to these changes. Community members also voted on which area of power they felt had changed most, and would be most important to enable further change in the future. It was not possible to hold full community discussions in Beit Skariya and Qosra due to the deteriorating conflict situation. The information from Beit Skariya was supplemented with focus group discussion data from 2014/15 PPA Outcome Review (in which Beit Skariya was visited specifically), carried out 6 months before Picture Power.

In Qosra, escalating tensions meant that significantly fewer photographs had been taken by the reporters, making it difficult to group them into thematic areas. Instead, a small selection of
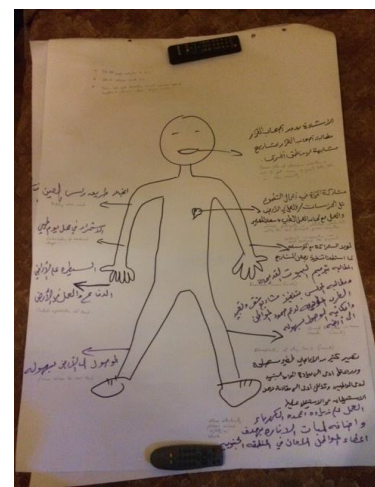
An example of a body map carried out in Qosra.

photographs were exhibited (as prompts for discussion) and a body mapping exercise carried out with three separate groups: elder men, women and male youths. The body mapping tool[11] helps understand the different types of power people have or need in a given context. In this instance, the different types of power were defined in the same way as the picture power exercise, and discussion groups looked at where changes in each of these areas of power had occurred. This echoed the approach of picture power exhibitions, where photographs were presented according to the four areas of power.

Triangulation

The Picture Power study was developed on the basis of findings related to the 2014/15 PPA Outcome Assessment, which in part explored 'accountability'. In line with the BOND quality evidence guide, which states that good triangulation is "two or more complimentary and distinct data collection methods and types of data", this study used participatory photography to explore individual and community perspectives on power, validated through FGDs and supported by other data sources collected via different methods. The photography and captions effectively work as KIIs and are then supported and corroborated with FGDs / body mapping. Supporting evidence was provided from:

- 2014/15 PPA Outcome Assessment data: Focused on exploring outcomes around risk management, advocacy and accountability. This primarily used FGDs along with KIIs;
- PPA Partner reporting: records of activities and outputs;
- Direct observation.

The value of referencing existing data such as the outcome assessment, for instance, was apparent in Beit Skariya. While it was not possible to have a group discussion or community exhibition, FGDs carried out six months earlier as part of the outcome assessment had explored facilitated discussions about accountability and empowerment. Building on existing data supported the Picture Power study, providing layered, sequential information for triangulation.

Strength and limitations

Rather than looking at questions of accountability between Christian Aid, partners and communities as initially planned, the methodology only allowed an exploration of the question from a community perspective, limiting the scope of the study. The study relied on community perspectives to identify drivers of change. Given the lack of objective data (the supporting data was almost entirely qualitative and collected through internal assessments) no firm conclusions about contribution could or should be drawn. Rather, the process allowed a more detailed exploration of themes relating to accountability and power raised in previous PPA reporting. This helped in building a richer picture of changes within the community and what role the project may have played in these.

It should also be noted that taking photos of some of the more abstract elements of change is challenging. The captioning (and understanding why certain photos were taken and others were not) and community focus group discussion element of participatory photography are vital to the process. By ensuring that these elements are carried out correctly, the method lends itself to being part of an assessment (although it is not in and of itself and assessment). However, the counter to this is that using participatory photography allowed participants to tell stories more directly, bypassing (initially at least) the need for an interpreter.

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[11] Body mapping tool

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What does power look like?

If *we give HAP training and accompaniment to communities, project partners to improve understanding of accountability practice…*

Then *partners will establish and communities will use community level mechanisms to improve accountability on information sharing, participation and complaints handling;*

As a result*, partners manage and modify accountability mechanisms in response to how they are used.* ***Communities are empowered; reporting more accountability with donors, partners and authorities, and the quality of programmes improves.***

As Picture Power seeks to gather the views of community members, the study focused on the empowerment of individuals and communities and their relationships with other actors, rather than the relationship between Christian Aid and our partners. However, interviews with partner staff allowed a brief reflection on their relationship with Christian Aid, which is included at the end of this report.

The range of activities carried out as a result of PPA work varied from the construction of infrastructure such as grain silos, flood defences and kindergarten buildings to capacity building through training in practical skills such as first aid, advocacy and food preservation and storage. These were the funded by the PPA programme as well as funding leveraged from various advocacy activities by communities with the support of partners.

The perceptions of change described by each of the communities shared many overlapping characteristics that linked to the accountability benchmarks. These activities demonstrated the integrated approach to resilience and risk management taken by both partners, incorporating elements of programming including market development, DRR, governance, health and climate change adaptation. The participation and mobilisation of community members was largely seen as positive by both men and women, who described significant shifts in power dynamics at household and community level, as well as in the wider interactions with a number of stakeholders. While the extent to which these changes had taken place differed between locations, community members consistently talked of having more control over the decisions that affected them.

All of this work remained framed by the overarching context of the conflict. When different Israeli actors were mentioned (such as illegal settlers, the Israeli state or the Israeli army), more often than not the differing groups were presented as one immovable and unapproachable entity. It was made clear that while community members felt empowered and stronger, they felt their efforts would only ever reach a certain point, after which the power dynamics could not be changed.

Power Within

In every community there were examples of positive shifts in power for individuals. The 14/15 Outcome Assessment found that participation for women had increased. Similarly, in Picture Power, **women highlighted that they felt more engaged in community life** and that in many cases they had a stronger voice in decision making, often as a result of the PVCA and community groups. Men often highlighted different changes to women as being important, focusing on **changes to their livelihoods** and the resources they had access to. In Qosra, there was a significant difference in perception between older and younger men about how women's participation had changed in the community.

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Exploring spaces within power

Greater participation for women was cited in each of the communities visited, albeit to different degrees, and most apparent in Jub al-Dhib. A small community of 150 people, men are absent six days a week working in nearby settlements, often illegally. Young men have been steadily leaving the area to find work and opportunities to marry and build homes elsewhere – the neighbouring settlement has banned new building since 2005. The particular context of the community may also have played a role in creating a supportive environment for such a dramatic change to take place, with an entirely female protection committee tackling the risks outlined in the action plan with success.

> 'Using the PVCA was the first time we had gathered the views of different age groups, people with different levels of literacy to ask what they want. We want to make using the PVCA the basis for all our community work… It gives you the ability to create proposals based on an understanding of how and where we can help.'
>
> YMCA coordinator

This included lobbying local authorities for electricity and coordinating several NGOs to fund a small supermarket in the town.

Collectively, the women agreed that the absence of the men meant an opportunity for them to lead in addressing the action plan, and that successfully taking on the challenges had empowered them all. This was evident in many ways: clear articulation of the rights and entitlements they felt able to demand from the local council; an expectation of having a say over NGO projects within the community and a greater say in decision making at home.

> Jub al-Dib: Fatima set up business as a wedding DJ, supported by a savings and loans scheme.
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> "The scheme developed the income and the status of women in the village. We the women proved we are capable of doing this - with due respect to the men, we proved that we can do a lot for our village."

In Beit Skariya, the changes experienced by individuals revolved around the ability to help address the effects of the conflict and a better understanding of rights. One female community reporter, Aisha, described how the work of the protection group to support the rights of individuals had empowered her, describing her experience. In 2013 she was attacked by settlers but worked with the protection committee to successfully bring about charges and subsequently penalties for those involved. She felt this empowered her and prompted her commitment to working on protection issues, including updating the Facebook page of the protection committee. Another female reporter, Khouloud, said that people had been given confidence by being able to make active contributions to community life, highlighted in the picture below.

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Khouloud (front row, far left) shared this picture of the protection committee in Beit Skariya. Her involvement in this has had a strong influence on her life.

"I have been able to help people and that has built my confidence. During the winter there was a snowstorm, metal blew off the roof and cut someone's main artery in their wrist. I was able to stop the bleeding until an ambulance arrived."

In Amuria, the female reporters Sharooq and Ferial documented the skills they had gained in First Aid and teaching through community training provided by PARC as part of the action plan. This equipped them to play a more active role in community life.

Amuria: Ferial had the opportunity to learn first aid as the lack of medical facilities was identified as a key risk in the community.

"This child had fallen down and injured his nose. He was at kindergarten so I helped him with first aid I had learnt. The first aid training came from PARC and World Vision and was something we identified in the action plan. There were many things the women couldn't do [in the community], *but now I have confidence and I am not afraid to help out."*

It was also clear that while involvement in protection committees and community organisation as a result of PPA work had supported empowerment for women, wider social changes were also playing a key role. Ferial also photographed her grandmothers and great aunt, pointing out that in the past, labour was divided equally between men and women, but restrictions by Israeli settlers that prevented women from farming the land meant more girls now remained in education, which was having a positive impact.

Similarly, in Jub al-Dhib, it was pointed out that younger men prioritised finding (often illegal) work in settlements, while younger women tended to stay on in education since there were fewer work

options open to them. In both cases, it was felt a programme focused on participation (the community groups formed as part of the PVCA) built on these social changes, as women were better placed to engage with their protection committees and play an increasingly active role in community decision making.

> *"In the past, with decision making, men were more in control. Now women are getting education there is more equality in families and in civil life. Our society is changing."*
>
> Ferial, Amuria

Changes in the lives of men

In Amuria, instead of the notions of confidence self-worth as expressed by women, men instead focused on ideas of freedom and access, selecting photographs that showed being able to reach working land or regain control over resources and livelihoods as important. This tied in with the differing risks that men and women felt they faced, when raised during the focus group discussion.

At the community discussion in Amuria, the men present selected the construction of a grain silo as the most important change, representing the freedom it gave them by ending a reliance on processing grain elsewhere and promoting a feeling of independence; 25% of the silo was funded by community members. They linked this to the fact that they face greater risks on a day to day basis than women because of having to leave the community for work. In contrast, the women felt the construction of a kindergarten to be more important, yet both ultimately wanted the same long term change: support for their children. The men saw the financial benefits of the silo as helping secure their children's future, while the women felt that education better provided this benefit.

> *"We face greater risk! We have to go out to work and get out of the village. Our women do not go anywhere."*
>
> Older man, Amuria

In Qosra there were differences of opinion on the extent to which women's involvement in community life had changed as a result of the programme. The male elders felt women were now far more involved in decision as a result of their participation on volunteer committees set up to address the action plan. This was at odds with the view of the women who felt that, although they were more actively involved by contributing the skills they had learned through the programme (like First Aid), they remained without any real say in wider community decision making.

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The young men in the community also felt that equal participation did not yet exist and was the most important change to continue working toward: *"Women are 50% of our community, how can they not help make decisions!"* (young man, Qosra) During discussions, this view was challenged by the male elders who, despite citing women's participation as an important change, said that an extension of this to participation in decision making would break the community. As a 'newer' community in the PPA, this contrasted with Amuria where both men and women agreed that female participation was much stronger than in the past, largely due to the formation of community groups.

In Jub al-Dhib, it was felt that older men faced greater risks that hadn't been addressed by the PVCA. Only the older men were allowed by settlers to harvest the olive crops, meaning a huge workload normally taken up by a family fell to one person. Fadia said that her father, an elderly man undergoing cancer treatment, still had to harvest their land since no one else in his family had permission to visit the olive groves.

Despite this, the men who attended the exhibition were pleased that the women were playing a greater role in the community as a result of the programme: *"We support them in the work they do. It is a benefit for the whole village. Most of the time we* [men] *are not in the village… [It is better] when it is the women in charge – they are much more accomplished!"* (young father, Jub al-Dhib)
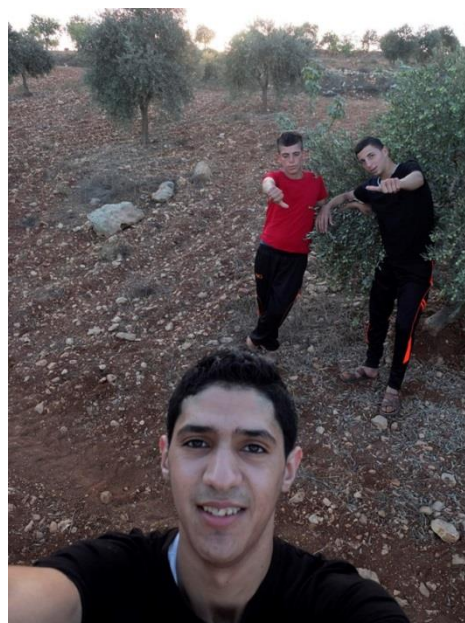
Ali, from Qosra, said he is able to share information and skills learned through the protection group with his friends, so everyone plays a role in addressing risk.

Power With

Reporters and community members felt that there had been a transformation in the relationships they had with many of the other actors. They had **gained greater control** over the implementation of projects and decisions that affected them and demand information relating to these, largely through better **understanding of their collective rights**. The use of PVCAs and action plans to guide projects and the **importance of advocacy training** were seen to have led to this change. Communities felt that there had been no change in relations with Israeli groups, and expressed frustration at not having been able to work with neighbouring Palestinian villages.

Working with NGOs

Community members across all communities explained that their expectations of what an interaction with an NGO should be had altered significantly. These expectations had changed from one of passive acceptance weighed against a fear of losing funding, to claiming and using power in the relationship productively to exert control over decision making and coordinate projects between organisations. The training given by PARC and YMCA in rights and advocacy, coupled with the formation of protection committees entrusted with representing the community, was the main reason given for this change.

There were numerous examples of how communities were exerting more control over their relationships. In Beit Skariya, NGO interventions had reached an uneven distribution of households,

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with some houses receiving two or even three upgrades as a result of poor targeting, an issue flagged up in PVCA action planning. The protection committee set up a system which took control of beneficiary targeting in an open way, sharing information widely on the rationale for decisions and guiding the interventions from NGOs.

"Since YMCA began working in Beit Skaryia a further 15 organisations have started working in the community. This created some issues around accountability and transparency, such as the duplication of work, like houses being renovated more than once. This led the community to create a system to address these issues and co-ordinate NGO efforts through a committee."

Hussein, Beit Skariya

In Amuria, the first point of contact for NGOs had become the protection committee. A system had been established through the PVCA process whereby PARC brokered relationships with other NGOs, who then dealt with the protection committee[12], who outlined what the community needed and relayed information for discussion back to the community. Two other NGOs had been brought on board via this approach to fund projects based on the action plan, including a kindergarten. During discussions, it was clear that people felt that they did not always receive the information they wanted from NGOs, and there was a clear expectation of what information they should be given: *"We know a little but not a lot – for instance we don't know who the funders are. We should have information but we don't always have it."* (older man, Amuria)

Participants in Amuria also clearly felt that any interaction should be a relationship, rather than a one-way exchange: *"The problem is the NGOs come and take our opinion and then disappear. They give us one training and go and there is no continuation of our relationship."* (older woman, Amuria)

"I have been teaching for a long time but I only used to teach my relatives. But after training from PARC and the project to build the kindergarten I was able to help more people in the community, by teaching their children when they came to lessons."

Sharooq, Amuria

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[12] The PARC co-ordinator pointed out that this was in line with both the PVCA process and also their focus on HAP, which prioritises coordination and networking as part of their commitment.

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In Jub al-Dhib, there had been a shift towards taking control over decision making to the extent that some NGO interventions had been rejected on the basis that they did not benefit everyone equally or because they were not what the community felt they needed. As reporter Fatimah put it, *"They kept giving us livestock just because these were the kind of projects we already knew about…"*

Instead of seeking larger projects, the community instead sought support from NGOs for smaller projects that they could exert more control over, coming up with creative solutions and approaches that previously they might have been restricted from making.

This including securing funding for small business start-ups including a wedding DJ business through a savings and loans scheme, and current plans to open a small profit-making community cinema, fulfilling an economic need (to reduce the cost of travel elsewhere) and addressing a protection issue (the dangers of travelling elsewhere).

"These are men who were brought in to work on the path to the kindergarten by an NGO. They didn't want their picture taken, but we said we should take their photo because anyone who comes to the village we should take their picture. It is my village and if someone is working here I have a right to take their picture."

Fadia, Jub al-Dhib

"We have always had the problem of electricity. A lot of institutions used to come here and we would tell them we need electricity only and they would just pack their bags and leave, saying there was nothing they can do. So when we looked at our risks we realised there is much more we can do. There was a lot more space for funders and donors to work in to do small things."

"Yes - a bird in your hand is like ten in the tree!"   (FGD, two older women, Jub al-Dhib)

Stronger engagement of local and national authorities

Each of the communities felt good progress had been made in dealing with local and even national government, although the limitations in abilities of these institutions (both fiscal and in authority) to act on the needs of communities meant that the views expressed highlighted the ability to be able to engage with these institutions as the most important change, rather than any material gains that resulted. In most cases, successful advocacy meant petitioning the local council for resources, but this was backed up by the strategic use of media campaigning to raise awareness of issues.

In Jub al-Dhib the local council provided enough diesel to fuel a generator for two hours an evening in response to being lobbied by women from the protection committee. The importance

While there were some issues around the use of complaints mechanisms, there were examples of these being used to demand accountability from other actors. In one instance a formal complaint against another NGO was made to YMCA, who acted and raised it with the organisation in question and resolved the matter. In Al Jiftlik, a complaint was made to PARC, and the CEO responded to the community in person. According to Saeed Ahmad Saeed Mawahre, chair of the Al Jiftlik protection committee, this built trust with the community.

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of this concession to the women who took part should not be understated. In the past, they would not have taken this action because of their gender, and were proud of what they had achieved. The advocacy training from YMCA and action plan gave them the confidence to approach the council: *"Before we used to be scared of politicians but now we are very confident and we are not scared of getting together to say what we want. We are getting more confident because we understand that this is our right – we are not asking for something that is not ours but we are asking for justice. So we become stronger in how we demand it."*
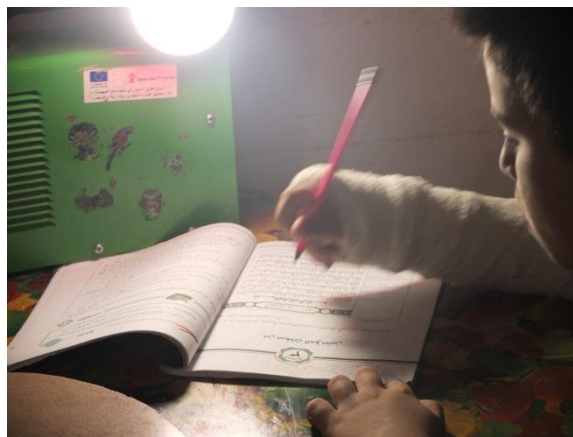
Jub al-Dhib: Fatimah said the PVCA process and action plan helped the community point NGOs to the projects that were really needed in the community. The pictures taken show her son doing homework at first in candlelight, then in electric light to show the contrast between the two and highlight the pride she felt in having contributed to securing the diesel.

In Qosra, the local authorities had helped part-fund the construction of a small road. For community members, it was not the road itself that was the important change, but their ability to demand their entitlements from the government. All of the community members who took part in the 'body mapping' exercise agreed that their increased ability to engage with local authorities was the most important change as a result of PPA work.

"[A few roads] have been rehabilitated and opened as part of the project. It was funded by PARC, local authorities and some other NGOs after it was included in our action plan. The roads connect people to the areas which previously they couldn't get there by car."

Taghreed, Qosra

In Amuria, advocacy was used to reach beyond the local council, with media coverage secured to highlight the need for a water supply, after which the Nablus Governorate agreed to fund half the cost of filling the water tanks. They also gained a school bus after sending a delegation of students to

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the Ministry of Planning to ask for school transport. The chair of the protection committee said that initially their request had been refused but media training and from PARC had supported them to try a different way of engaging: *"Now we are happy to get the media involved. Before media training, the water used to be cut to our villages, so we went to the local council a few times* [who refused their request]. *So we brought in the TV crew and spoke with them. This forced the Local Authority to bring water to us, as it was blocked previously by the settlers."*

The use of media was a key strategy that had been developed in Amuria in order to circumvent 'blockages' when engaging with authorities. It was apparent that this had only built confidence in their right to continue to demand services rather than settle for a partial solution: *"For transportation, we sent students to the Minister to speak with him and we got a bus. We also brought in journalists again a few days ago. That will help connect us to the president of the local council so that we can continue put pressure on them* [local authorities] *to get better transportation."* (protection committee chair, female, Amuria)

Ferial took this photo of the head of the protection committee meeting with journalists.

"Older children in Amuria have to go to school in Luban, which is about 6km away. It is near the main road and there have been car accidents involving settlers and the children have also been attacked. We tried to contact the politicians but they didn't respond to us so we turned to the media. We talked to a TV programme about the situation, and the Ministry of Transportation has since started a bus service to take them to school, but only in the mornings."

The strategy of engaging the media when attempting to access government resources was also used in other communities. For instance, in Beit Skariya, community members said that some members of the national media were actively monitoring their Facebook pages and had come and interviewed them as a result of their posts.

Working with other Palestinian communities

Interestingly, aside from the example of Al Jiftlik, inter-community cooperation was limited. with issues around the power and influence of local councils blocking cooperation efforts or even exacerbating longstanding tensions over funding and resources. In Jub al-Dhib, community members felt it had proven difficult to work with local councils in the surrounding area because their

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community was small and it was hard to have their voices heard. They were keen for this to happen in the longer term.

In Amuria (c. 400 people), the merging of their former council with that of a much larger town nearby, Luban (c. 3,000 people) a few years before the project began had resulted in a huge shift in power balance for the area towards Luban. Community members noted that the vast majority of authority funding ended up in Luban rather than tackling needs in Amuria, and it had proven difficult to build a working relationship even though Luban was engaged in PPA work also between 2011 and 2014.

In Al Jiftlik, PARC supported community members to engage not only with local authorities, but to use the network of village councils in the area to form relationships with 7 other communities nearby to work together and address communal risks, such as flooding, outlined in the PVCA. Members of the Al Jiftlik protection committee even organised themselves to provide training and facilitation in the PVCA to the other communities who had not participated in one previously.

Power To

The collective ability to manage risks and increase self-reliance was highlighted in each community as having changed. Despite the overarching theme of powerlessness in relation to tackling the occupation, there was hope and confidence that the *effects* of the occupation were being addressed through the work that was being carried out. Through reporting and community discussions, it became clear that often this feeling stemmed from **pride in what had been achieved so far** and a sense that the range of measures that could be taken to address issues had broadened, particularly through the use of advocacy.

Successfully addressing risks together

This was arguably the simplest concept of power to photograph and so became the most represented, with many examples of the accomplishments that had been made. Photographs provided tangible examples of how better community cohesion through the PVCA process formed the basis around which change happened. In Jub al-Dhib, the women said that the benefit of everyone, not just men, sharing experiences and ideas was having an impact: "*It is the women working together, there is much more confidence. The men used to work for their own benefits and honesty is the most important thing. To be honest with your neighbours and with your community.*"

Itadel in Jub al-Dhib took this picture of members of the protection committee meeting.

"*To be successful you should have a unified word, you need trust within your group and you should communicate well with your community to understand their needs, and then to be the voice of the community.*"

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Participants in each community felt that their achievements represented a newly found collective strength in carrying out actions to address the issues they faced. The example of this given most often was of having how the actions taken by the community had increased self-reliance, whether through being able to prevent further settlement expansion, take responsibility for the education of children in the community or become producers of the food needed to feed families.

Fatimah took this photograph of the community shop that was opened in Jub al-Dhib. She said that it was funded by a number of NGOs, co-ordinated by the community. The success of the shop has been a source of pride for her.

Self-reliance was a recurrent theme, relating strongly to the boycott, divestments and sanctions (BDS) campaign[13]. The photographs taken reflected that there were still risks to self-reliance that the community could continue to target, and in doing so ensure that only Palestinian goods would be used. Reporter Hussein in Beit Skariya, said, *"Our community shop was the result of our action plan. Now we have stopped buying Israeli products and we can now buy Palestinian products. It caters to the basic needs to the community there. In the past, you would have had to travel outside of the village to go to commercial centres."*

While the supermarket in Jub al-Dhib has helped in securing some access to some market goods, Fadia noted that tomatoes were more expensive than chicken per kg, as they were so hard to obtain.

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[13] In 2005, Palestinian civil society issued a call for a campaign of boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it complies with international law and Palestinian rights.

> *"This is a photo of my family harvesting grapes for sale in Palestine. Trade can be impacted by settler violence, and that can be unpredictable. There is a shortage of Palestinian-made boxes so we have to use Israeli branded packaging. We cannot show this in a photograph."*
>
> Aisha, Beit Skariya

The importance of community organisation

Communities tended to focus on the importance of community groups formed as part of the PVCA process. In Jub al-Dhib during the focus group discussion, the point was made that while projects might target certain groups of people, the PVCA / community group approach meant decision making was collective, unlike in the past: *"We refuse to take projects individually, so one project has to go to the entire village* [for discussion]. *We all have shared problems, like a lack of roads, so the solutions have to be agreed collectively."*

The role of the protection committee in facilitating information sharing was crucial and it was clear that community members in each instance had invested a great deal of trust that their protection committee would represent their views to a wider audience. Conversely, a lack of a similar level of trust was noticeable in Amuria, where there was tension between the protection committee and the many of the other participants in the focus group discussion, who did not feel well informed about the work the committee was doing.

In Amuria and Qosra, the power to collectively achieve things was seen the most important element to keep building on in the future, as these accomplishments had already been seen to benefit the whole community. There were a great number of examples given of what had already been achieved, from the construction of the grain silo in Amuria part-funded by community members, to the planting of olive trees in areas close to settlements in Qosra in order to *"control and protect the land".*

The role in information sharing in building social networks offered by working collectively was also important. Sahar, in Qosra, is a member of a conservative family with little opportunity to directly engage with the wider community, despite working as a schoolteacher. However, her personal experience was that she was able to engage more in community life and share her experiences with others through the Facebook page set up by the protection committee. This meant the main benefit of information sharing was not in learning more about the project, but instead to make connections with those living near her.

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Taghreed showed how terracing hillsides and planting olive trees in Qosra as part of the PPA means that the land they are on can no longer be taken, allowing them an element of control over the land that remains to them. In the distance, settlement factories are now hemmed in by olive trees to prevent expansion.

Power Over

The spaces of power dominated by the occupation, in the form of settlers or soldiers, had not changed. The ability to challenge power over, to face the occupation and be able to assume control over resources represented the limitations of what had been achieved through PVCA and action plan development. This was felt across each community. Access to various services had been cut by settlers in each location while the road networks used to reach villages were in most cases dangerous from risk of attack to the poor state of the surface.

This was crucial in **understanding why changes in the other areas of power, often as a result of PPA work, were regarded as so important for communities.** The chance to regain land that had been taken did not exist, whereas measures to protect that which remained could be taken. Precisely because of the conflict and such an overwhelming exercise of power and control, it meant smaller changes represented an achievable form of empowerment.

A protection committee member in Beit Skariya puts out a fire started by settlers. Hussain pointed out that the community now work together to prevent and mitigate attacks and violations by settlers, but are unable to address the root causes of the violence.

There were similar photos from the other communities, showing the impacts of the conflict, both large and small. Ferial illustrated the power over the land ultimately held by the IDF, showing a helicopter launch pad based on what was farming land in the past.

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"The Israelis use this as helicopter landing pad so they can drop soldiers here. They used to come into the village, during the second intifada. They would conduct searches. They still use this to reach all the neighbourhoods in this area."

Ferial, Amuria

"The Israeli Soldiers protect the settlers when they come to attack us and they throw teargas at us. There is a lot of this kind of ordinance left lying around… We are not allowed to get to our land and olive groves here without military permission. During the olive harvest season we are only allowed to harvest on one day, for a specific time."

Taghreed, Qosra

Beit Skaryia: Aisha poses in a photograph taken by Khouloud. Settlers and Palestinians don't mix, despite the settlement cutting through the middle of the community. The tree is a religious site for the settlers but is on land previously owned by Aisha's family.

The stories were not only linked to control over resources. In Jub al-Dhib, the limitations on building and the lack of services was driving young men from the community to find opportunities and settle down elsewhere. Younger men mainly worked in settlements, often illegally, since they were not allowed to farm on land near the community.
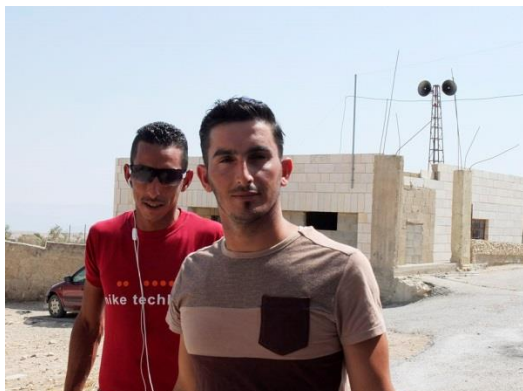
Young men in Jub al-Dhib, photographed by Fadia. The minaret in the background can only be erected on scaffolding as the nearby settlements have placed an order banning any new construction in the village.

"We are very worried that they [the youth] are leaving. They want things like technology and the internet, and it is hard to live here."

The fear and lack of communication contributing to the situation was also summed up: "*There is a settler car that has come here for the last two days. They have been coming around our houses and asking questions. Lots of us are scared that there might be an attack in the coming days.*" (older women, Jub al-Dhib)

"In this picture, you will see our road - we are not allowed to pave this because of the settlers. We are not allowed to herd the sheep in these areas… You can see the children approaching the car without knowing the risks. The settlers have cameras and we are under surveillance all of the time - they know everyone who lives here."

Fadia, Jub al-Dhib

Everyone spoken to agreed that the idea of working with any of the Israeli settler communities was unfeasible now or in the future. Everyone who participated in reporting and focus group discussions across each community agreed that there was little or no direct communication with the settler communities. In Beit Skariya for instance, despite Aisha's success in securing a small amount of justice, she felt this had not led to any wider shift in power towards the community or a change in relations.

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Mitigating the risk of the conflict

Despite the challenges facing each community, the PVCA process was felt to have encouraged communities to look at and break down risks and effects of the occupation, if not the occupation itself. This in and of itself offered hope. For instance, one of the key achievements of the advocacy work in Beit Skariya was to be recognised as a Palestinian community, as noted in the 14/15 outcome assessment FGD:

"The PVCA process has enabled Beit Skariya to be recognised as a Palestinian community; this is one of the biggest successes of the project. Demolitions used to happen and no one would take any notice. Previously, even the Palestinian Authority would claim that the whole area was Gush Etzion, but it is now a recognised village. The community Facebook page has supported this [by raising awareness].*"*

In Amuria, community discussions emphasised how important preventing further loss of land had been to the community in mitigating the risks of the conflict. With much of the area ultimately controlled by the soldiers, ensuring safe passage to their plantations was important, and the collective actions taken to build roads and plant olive groves was a significant part of this. By breaking down the wider effects of the conflict, managing the risks associated with it started to become possible.

Observations and reflections

*If we give HAP training and accompaniment to communities, project partners to improve understanding of accountability practice… **Then** partners will establish and communities will use community level mechanisms to improve accountability on information sharing, participation and complaints handling; **As a result**, partners manage and modify accountability mechanisms in response to how they are used. Communities are empowered; reporting more accountability with donors, partners and authorities, and the quality of programmes improves.*

The aim of this report was to compliment the formal assessments of PPA work with the perceptions of community members themselves. The views expressed by community members suggested that the TOC outlined by the project holds true: community members did feel more empowered and reported more accountability with donors, partners and *Palestinian* authorities. In working with partners, this was a result of the programme and the participatory way in which it was implemented, specifically the PVCA approach. In working with other actors, the training provided by partners on advocacy and rights and the use of the action plan meant communities were able to demand their rights from local authorities and take greater control in dealing with other NGOs.

Communities were clearly engaging with the mechanisms to ensure accountability, particularly around participation and information sharing. Complaints mechanisms, while used a small degree, presented a challenge for partners. While HAP itself was not mentioned by community members, it was evidenced through the three benchmarks. They also felt that this had improved the quality of programming, at least in their own experience.

In carrying out the Picture Power study, some themes emerged that should feed into Christian Aid's accountability practices as part of the programmatic learning from the PPA and resilience work. These themes broadly fall under the following headings:

- The importance of trust in relationships

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- Building in accountable practices from the earliest opportunity
- The need to revisit power analysis and PVCAs on a regular basis
- Complaints mechanisms still remain a challenge
- Working with Christian Aid

Building trust

The value of trust as part of an accountable relationship should not be underestimated, particularly in relation to effectively sharing information. While this is not revelatory, it was noticeable that the partner / community relationships that were closer and relied on face to face contact on a regular basis appeared stronger and more equitable. The focus of the YMCA on the PVCA process and the use of the action plan as a starting point for a continued relationship appeared to have contributed to mutual trust with the community. For the coordinator, being able to work with communities to understand what risks they faced and could address was a hugely positive change from working on community projects in the past. The communities visited concurred with this view, valuing the control they had over project work and the dialogue they had with YMCA.

The focus of PARC on HAP processes was a very positive step. It could be argued however that the experiences of the communities visited were slightly different from those working with YMCA. In Amuria in particular, this appeared to be linked to the protection committee finding challenges in sharing information widely among the community and less direct contact from partner staff with the community. This meant community members were less clear on the role of PARC and expressed frustration at a lack of information on ongoing projects. Overall, this reinforced findings across the wider PPA programme that accountable, equitable relationships are built on trust. The quality of interactions not only between partners and communities but also within communities are vital and should be revisited regularly to understand what is and is not working.

Meaningful accountable practices from the earliest opportunity

Linking back to the importance of the PVCA, it was clear from each of the communities visited that the PVCA process had increased participation and changed power dynamics for individuals and collectively. As the entry point for both project planning and implementation, this is unsurprising. What was also emphasised was the social cohesion that resulted from the process, with new relationships formed within communities and a collective sense of achievement and ownership.

Sustainability is used widely and to mean many different things, but it was clear that in these contexts, communities valued the relationships and capacities they had developed that would mean they could continue the work that had been started themselves. The PVCA process and action plan, and the ownership this gave communities from the start, along with the subsequent collective actions taken as a community, was highlighted many times as the key difference to working with other NGOs that made a significant contribution to the changes in power, both within the community and in working with others.

Understandably, given that the language is used mainly by partners and Christian Aid, 'HAP' was not mentioned by communities in any great detail. At a community level at least, accountability starts with PVCAs and the working relationship they establish with partners. HAP was clearly important to partners, but as a supplement to accountable programming rather than the basis of it. Rewording the TOC statement to reflect this would make sense.

The need to revisit power analysis and PVCAs on a regular basis

Within communities

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As should be expected, levels of participation varied between communities. This was particularly expressed by the women in Beit Skariya, Amuria and Jub al-Dhib, who gave many examples of feeling more able to contribute to their society that in the past. In Qosra, it was clear that while the men were happy that the women were participating more, women themselves made it clear that increased participation had not yet led to a significant change in power relations. In Jub al-Dhib, the women were in control of project worked almost entirely, as a result of the men having to work outside of the community in settlements for the majority of the time.

In each case, revisiting power analysis, ideally at the same time as revisiting the PVCA, would be beneficial, fostering a collective understanding of what had, or had not, changed. The Picture Power reporters in Jub al-Dhib felt strongly that the process of looking at change had better helped them understand how much they had achieved. PVCAs and power analysis help create an effective forum for discussion about differences in experience for community members and their different needs, priorities and what opportunities might have arisen.

It would help facilitating community discussions in Qosra about what might be done to enhance the role of women in decision making and explore why there was a marked difference in views between different generations of men. In Jub al-Dhib it could be used to help ensure that the views of the men in the community were still being addressed (given their reduced role in community life as a result of seeking work in settlements). The other side of this coin was that the absence of men from day to day life in Jub al-Dhib had helped create a safe space for women to exert control over decision making processes. Power analysis also helps signal where opportunities like this might have exist and how best that they be taken advantage of.

Looking outwards: Between communities and other stakeholders

Revisiting power analysis goes beyond this though. It would also help in looking to break down the barriers mentioned by communities to engaging more widely with politicians, other NGOs, other communities, the private sector and advocacy networks and even with partners. In particular, engaging with advocacy networks appeared to be one key area where community engagement was lacking. While it is likely to be beyond the scope of a community to address the conflict, engaging in wider networks for advocacy had proven beneficial in other country programmes. Advocacy appeared to be carried out by PARC and YMCA based on evidence from their programmatic work with communities, rather than linking communities directly to advocacy networks or establishing new partnerships. There appeared to be few examples of advocacy extending beyond the idea of ask and receive, rather than concerted, planned efforts to achieve change in a strategic manner.

There is an onus on both partners and Christian Aid to help facilitate this, which can be challenging as it takes time and resources to build a coherent, effective advocacy strategy. Power mapping is something to be revisited in order look at opportunities, understand blockages and engage different spheres of power and influence.

Social networks should also continue to be explored. In Beit Skariya and Qosra, it was noted that starting Facebook pages, encouraged by both partners as an activity for protection committees to carry out, not only connected individuals within the community but also linked them with other communities elsewhere (the Beit Skariya Facebook page currently has 929 followers from inside and outside the community) who were going through similar problems. The 14/15 Outcome Assessment reported: *"In both Beit Skariya and Al Jiftlik the young people had set up a Facebook page and were actively posting updates on issues within their community. In Al Jiftlik the joint action plan developed between communities included advocacy and awareness-raising through Facebook. One young lady*

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[Aisha] *in Beit Skariya had been attacked by settlers in her home, but had taken a photo of them which she posted on the community Facebook page. She reported them and they had to do a day of community service as a result."*

The case study in Al Jiftlik, where community members had taken it upon themselves to link risk mapping between all the communities in their area via the network of local councils was the one example of this happening. As a result of this, it was pointed out by the protection committee that interrelated risks could be jointly managed, such as flooding or transport links. The protection committee felt that this approach came from the introduction of rights and power early into the PVCA process and a focus on information sharing not only as a way of disseminating information, but also of sharing experience and finding new solutions.

Formal complaints mechanisms are not always appropriate

Both partners acknowledged that of the three key benchmarks for HAP, community complaints mechanisms had proven most challenging. This was largely contextual – both partners felt that the idea of complaining was culturally unusual and that communities believed that in complaining they risked losing funding. Communities did use the mechanisms, as demonstrated by the examples from YMCA and PARC. But generally people used the mechanism as a way to flag personal issues that they faced, rather than provide feedback or complaints as partners would understand the term.

Evidence from communities did bear out the idea that formal mechanisms of complaints were less effective as a means of raising concerns; face-to-face contact was seen as more effective rather than using formal channels such as the complaints box or via text message and phone call. It was the partners' notions of what 'complaints' are which were challenged. Both agreed that the idea of changing the mechanism name to 'feedback' would most likely have a positive effect, something each will now try.

Working with Christian Aid

Although not specifically addressed as part of Picture Power, there were some points made by YMCA and PARC on Christian Aid's accountability that are worth mentioning.

The basis for an accountable approach in OPT relies on strong relationships between Christian Aid and partners and then again between partners and communities, since Christian Aid does not implement work directly. Additionally, Christian Aid does not have a country office (unlike in many other programmes) and any relationship is managed remotely. This in theory puts additional pressure on partners to bear more of the responsibility for accountability to communities than Christian Aid staff.

The flexibility of the PVCA approach in allowing communities to determine where and how funds were spent was cited by both YMCA and PARC staff as key in encouraging a participatory approach. It was mentioned that in comparison to other projects, both co-ordinators were more confident that the work taking place met the needs of the community, and that participants were more willing to engage as they felt much greater ownership over projects.

The PARC coordinator also felt that one of the main benefits of accountability was in building a better understanding between PARC and donors such as Christian Aid. By sharing information and encouraging transparency, she felt that there shared set of expectations from the start for what a project should achieve. This gave her greater confidence in her work.

Finally, an important point noted by one YMCA staff member was that Christian Aid programming could be community-led to a greater extent, particularly in developing indicators for reporting. The

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example given was the PPA Theory of Change reporting, where indicators were developed between the YMCA and Christian Aid staff. Giving space to communities to input and decide on what changes they would like to see would be better practice in the long term.

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Annex 1: Assessing HAP

Accountability to communities – a guide for looking at HAP in outcome assessments

Christian Aid is committed to ensuring that the programmes we support are accountable to the communities we are aiming to assist. We know that a modest investment in information sharing, involvement by project participants in the design and delivery of programmes, and ensuring there is a means of listening to and acting on feedback, brings a significant return – not only in participant satisfaction and engagement in projects, but also in the tangible success of projects.

The key things to look for:

Below is a quick overview of the issues/ evidence we are trying to capture for <u>each of the HAP benchmarks</u>. This picture of 'how we work now' will form the basis of our future plan to improve our practice. Refer to the HAP Standard for the full list of the 6 HAP Benchmarks.

Benchmark 3 – Sharing information

The organisation ensures that the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders have access to timely, relevant and clear information about the organisation and its activities.

Looking to see

- What information is shared with communities
- When that information is shared
- How (through what medium, media and languages) that information is shared and with what success

Benchmark 4 – Participation

The organisation listens to the people it aims to assist, incorporating their views and analysis in programme decisions

Looking to see:

- How community members are involved in project decision making processes
- How beneficiaries are identified using age, gender, diversity and special needs
- How women, boys, girls and men are able to influence decisions throughout the project cycle

Benchmark 5 – Complaints/feedback

The organisation enables the people it aims to assist and other stakeholders to raise complaints/feedback and receive a response through an effective, accessible and safe process.

Looking to see:

- What kind of feedback/complaints does the partner receive from community members
- How would communities like to feedback/complaints to partners
- How successful are the communities in raising complaints and how confident do they feel that they will be address

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Annex 2: Picture Power process

1. Select community reporters
2. Photographic training
3. Reporting and photo captioning
4. Community exhibition
5. Validation focus group discussions

Selecting community reporters

The primary criteria for selecting photo reporters was for **motivated and enthusiastic people** to take part in the project, who were interested in wider community perspectives; it was less important whether they were directly associated with the project in some way. Partners selected three to four community members from each community to take part in the photo-monitoring training, with 14 reporters participating in total. The community members were largely women and youth, and generally were people who had been involved in the project. Male participation was limited by a need to work outside of the community in settlements, and due to the start of the olive-picking season in October.

Partner	Community and Population	Name	Gender and age	Project involvement
PARC	Amuria	Yusuf	Male, young adult	
	Amuria	Ferial	Female, young adult	Protection committee
	Amuria	Sharooq	Female, young adult	Protection committee
PARC	Qosra	Taghreed	Female, young adult	Protection committee
	Qosra	Ali	Male, teenager	Protection committee
	Qosra	Sahar	Female, young adult	
	Qosra	Shareen	Female, adult	Protection committee chair
YMCA	Jub al-Dhib	Fadia	Female, adult	Protection committee
	Jub al-Dhib	Fatima	Female, adult	Protection committee
	Jub al-Dhib	Itadel	Female, adult	Protection committee
YMCA	Beit Skariya	Aisha	Female, young adult	Protection committee
	Beit Skariya	Harood	Female, young adult	
	Beit Skariya	Hussain	Male, adult	Protection committee
	Beit Skariya	Khouloud	Female, young adult	

Photographic training and reporting

In the first instance, photo monitors learned about photography and different ways to think about how to express changes they had seen through the medium. At this stage, issues of accountability and power were not addressed directly, to avoid as much as possible guiding what was to be photographed. Rather, photo monitors sought to photograph changes they felt were most important to them as well as areas of personal interest. After a period of a few days, we revisited them and talked through their photos, offered more support and encouraged each monitor to focus on one area based on what they had identified so far.

This was not prescriptive but rather came from the interests of the reporters themselves. For instance, in Amuria, Yusuf was interested in advocacy towards the local authorities and so concentrated on the collective action that had taken place and changes in how the community had worked together to achieve certain things. Meanwhile Ferial and Sharooq instead looked at how the protection committee functioned and what it meant to those involved.

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The number of photographs taken varied between communities. In in Qosra only a handful of photographs (100 or so) were taken after the second visit. In contrast, Jub al-Dhib had taken over 4,000 pictures. In Amuria and Beit Skariya, there were around 2,000 photographs in total. In the case of Qosra, this limited the number of photographs that could be used as part of the community exhibitions and focus groups discussions. However, it still proved possible to use this small number of photographs to spark a wider discussion when used in conjunction with another participatory process (see further down), showing the Picture Power process can respond to differing levels of engagement.

Adaptation

At this stage of the project there was a sudden escalation in violence across the West Bank and continuation would have been extremely risky for both partners and community members, particularly as the possibility of any travel was limited. To overcome this, the following adaptations were made:

1. A remote monitoring plan was agreed with partners for three communities with internet access, including ongoing support from the project photographer Matthew Gonzalez-Noda and PPA Programme Officer David Adam
2. Jub al-Dhib, with no internet access, were visited to discuss plans and ensure we weren't seen to be abandoning the project – interestingly, this community also returned the greatest number of photos, suggesting there is a return on investment in time
3. A return date was agreed with partners, for the project to continue four weeks later
4. A widening of the brief for reporters to include recording the experiences of each community during the unrest.

The project was resumed four weeks later over a five day period. This allowed us to extend captioning sessions to 1 day per community (as there were many additional photos taken).

Captioning

For the next stage of Picture Power, photo monitors looked back through their photographs to decide which they felt were the most important. This can be a time-consuming process so it was important to make sure there is a sufficient allocation of time. These photos were then captioned by the reporters with stories to provide further qualitative information. The large number of photos meant that the best way to achieve this was to group the photos into different 'stories' and collectively caption them. This process allowed reporters to tell a cohesive story, rather than breaking up a story across several different photographs and captions.

Following this, the facilitators assigned the pictures to the different themes relevant to the project; in this instance, these related to the four types of power and included a mixture of photographs linked in some way to the project and more general pictures taken to illustrate daily life. This helped in facilitating community discussions later on. The captioning process takes several hours and assigning the photographs to themes afterwards limits the extent to which stories are shaped to fit within specific themes. Once completed, a discussion was held with the reporters to explain the groupings for each set of photographs and how they linked to the different areas of power. This gave them the opportunity to make changes and ask questions.

Validation and community exhibitions – a change in approach

Validating the photos and stories of the reporters was the final stage of the process. Ideally, this is done through focus group discussions. The security situation meant this was possible only in Jub al-

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Dhib and Amuria. However, in the case of Beit Skariya there was a significant amount of existing data from previous assessments to compare and validate against, while in Qosra it was possible to carry out the exercise using a different approach.

This stage is where the stories and changes identified by reporters (both relating to the PPA and separate) are introduced to the community, including non-beneficiaries. Through group discussions, other people are able to collectively assess whether these photos and themes represent wider opinion, and explore differences in experience.

In Amuria and in Jub al-Dhib, it was possible to hold full community validation sessions. With support from partners and their community, photo monitors set up a pop-up exhibition, inviting community members along to look at the photographs and discuss and validate/refute the impacts. The photos were displayed in groupings relating to each of the four power areas, around a brief description of what the grouping meant. The reporters took groups of community members around and discussed the photos and the stories behind them, as well as discussing the areas of power.

As community members (a mixture of those directly and indirectly involved in the project) browsed the photographs, they indicated those they felt more relevant by voting with small stickers (disaggregated by men and women). Following this, there were plenary discussions to talk about the conversations community members had held, the choices that had been made and the areas where there was agreement and disagreement. The voting highlighted areas of consensus and where there were differences in experience, while the follow-up focus group discussions explored these areas in greater detail.

Where these differences existed, for instance in identifying the most important changes for men and women in Amuria, community members were able to discuss this further. This lead to an understanding that a shared aim (security for their children) was at the heart of the differing views. It enabled a range of community perspectives to be shared, so that in Jub al-Dhib,

There was also discussion around which of the four areas had seen most change and which would be most important to change in the future. It also encouraged discussion among the community about the work taking place and was a further way of sharing information, reinforcing accountability.

In Qosra, the relatively small number of photographs necessitated a different approach. The photos were exhibited together and used to inform small group sessions built around body mapping, with the pictures providing examples of PPA work and images of the wider community to prompt discussion. Groupings included young boys, women of varying ages and a group of elder men from the town leadership. The group sessions encouraged discussions about the four different areas of power in the context of the project and in the wider community.

Reflections on the methodology

Picture Power was a positive way of ensuring that individual and community perceptions could be heard. The feedback given by communities was that they enjoyed the process as it allowed them to reflect upon the changes that had happened.

However, the approach is limited unless there is robust triangulation to ensure that the stories given are representative. The scope was also limited to looking at change the impact of accountable processes at community level, excluding changes for partners or Christian Aid. The process is intensive, requiring a great deal of time from partners and community members, and there are financial implications that should be considered.

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Annex 3: Timeframe

Timeframe

 Postponed to later than planned

 Schedule change

Date	Activity	Location
Monday 28ᵗʰ September	1 day training PARC communities Six community members (three from each selected village) and one PPA programme Staff	Qosra and Amuria
Tuesday 29ᵗʰ September	1 day training YMCA communities	Beit Skaryia and Jub al-Dhib
Wednesday 30ᵗʰ September	1 day follow up in PARC communities Half a day with each community and its members	Qosra and Amuria
Thursday 1ˢᵗ October		
Friday 2ⁿᵈ October		
Saturday 3ʳᵈ October	1 day follow up in YMCA communities Half a day with each community and its members	Beit Skaryia and Jub al-Dhib
Sunday 4ᵗʰ October	1 day working with PARC PPA staff	
Monday 5ᵗʰ October	1 day working with YMCA PPA staff	
Tuesday 6ᵗʰ October	Meeting with Jun al-Dhib	
Sunday 15ᵗʰ November	1 day captioning	Beit Skaryia
Monday 16ᵗʰ November	1 day captioning	Jub al-Dhib
Tuesday 17ᵗʰ November	1 day captioning	Qosra
Wednesday 18ᵗʰ November	1 day captioning	Amuria
Thursday 19ᵗʰ November	Preparation	
Friday 20ᵗʰ November		
Saturday 21ˢᵗ November	1 day exhibition in Jub al-Dhib	
Sunday 23ʳᵈ November	1 day exhibition in Qosra / Amuria	

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