

## #4: REVIEWS AND EVALUATIONS

**A note to all partners**

Review and evaluation are important learning processes. Learning is about what has worked well and also what has worked less well. A review or evaluation report is one way of sharing learning, to help improve the quality of our work and of other partners' work. With your agreement, review and evaluation reports may be shared with other partners and with donors, for learning and for accountability.

A review is generally undertaken as a part of ongoing work, to check progress against plans and outcomes to date. An evaluation usually takes place towards the end of a programme or project.

### **Top ten tips: for managing a review or evaluation process**

- 1 Planning and preparation are essential; a review or evaluation should be built into the original proposal and overall budget, as well as annual workplans and budgets.
- 2 Early on in the process consider:  
*Why you want a review or evaluation, and what you want to learn about.*  
This will help discern who is best placed to facilitate the review or evaluation and how.
- 3 If you want an external facilitator, try to involve that person as you develop terms of reference; this can help you all to clarify focus and expectations.
- 4 Time visits to suit those people and communities involved, both women and men. CAFOD would usually expect communities to be involved (or participate) actively in the process.
- 5 Build in time to analyse the information gathered, preferably with those involved.
- 6 Expect different stakeholders to have differing views (or perspectives) on change. Ensure that findings are consistent in at least three instances before you draw conclusions from them.
- 7 Consider sorting examples of change into a framework such as this:

<b>Whose perspective:</b>		
<b>Expected / Unexpected</b>	<b>Positive changes</b>	<b>Negative changes</b>
<b>Expected changes:</b>		
<b>Unexpected change(s):</b>		

Try to understand (or analyse) which processes and changes worked well and why; and which did not work well and why. What else might be needed to ensure positive change can be sustained, or to counter negative change(s)?

- 8 Build in adequate time for reflection and comment on the draft report. Make sure the terms of reference and the methodology are included in the draft. Make clear, in advance, who will be expected to read the draft and what their roles will be. One key role (in which an outsider may be more objective) is to assess the quality of data gathering processes and data analysis.
- 9 Donors will wish to see the final report and learn, in the light of its recommendations, what changes are being considered. Other partners and NGOs will be interested in the learning. Staff and communities involved should be kept informed, although may not want to see the written report.
- 10 Keep review separate from planning. Aim to complete the review process first.

CAFOD expects you to tell us your terms of reference well in advance of any review or evaluation of work that we support, whether or not you included this in your plans and budgets.

### **Effective review and evaluation**

An effective review or evaluation is based on a sound analysis, provides timely insights into performance and informs future directions. A focussed, well-executed small-scale review may be more effective than an extensive (and expensive) piece of work done by outsiders.

#### **Five focus questions**

1. What changes have people experienced as a result of the work, ie what are the outcomes of the work?
2. How relevant or appropriate are these outcomes, in light of the overall goal of the work? For emergency responses, a focus on coverage, timeliness or protection may also be important.
3. What evidence is there of positive impact (deeper, broader, longer-term change) as a result of the work?
4. How sustainable are these changes?
5. In some areas of work, co-ordination with other organisations, and complementarity to what they are doing may also be important in assessing overall effectiveness. Looking back, might a different approach have used available resources more effectively?

#### **The Report**

This should include:

- An executive summary
- A brief overview of context
- A summary of key findings
- Lessons learned, general conclusions for wider use
- Recommendations, targeted to specified teams, organisations or other intended users
- Terms of reference
- A brief description of methodology and process
- Links and directions to source material and other reference documents

Put any supplementary material in an annex. Keep the length of the main report to less than 30 pages.

#### **“Differing Opinions”**

Address possible conflicts of interest openly and honestly. Respect requests for anonymity or confidentiality by informants, within the law. Acknowledge any unresolved differences of opinion, within a review or evaluation team. Where possible, investigate and resolve any disputes about facts that can be verified and, if necessary, change the report to reflect this.

CAFOD’s gender policy aims to promote the full participation of women and men, in such a way that women are empowered along with men. We are particularly interested in learning about the changes that your work has brought about in women’s lives, as well as in men’s lives.

#### **CAFOD Guidelines for Partners:**

**#1: Project Proposals (2007)**

**#2: Progress Reports (2007)**

**#3: Financial Reports (2007)**

**#4: Reviews and Evaluations (2007)**

**#5: Assessing your own Organisation (2007)**

**#6: Humanitarian Responses (2007)**

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