

Response to feedback from volunteers about CAFOD's proposed ways of working in England and Wales

Contents

Introduction and context

What we heard from you

1. Volunteering with CAFOD
2. Stewardship
3. Local working relationships, offices and structures
4. Timing and timelines
5. Communication
6. Connection to partners and projects

CAFOD's response

1. Volunteering with CAFOD
 - 1A. Volunteering – the way forward
 - 1B. What does this mean for me as a volunteer?
 - 1C. What does this mean for local staff?
2. Stewardship
3. Working together
4. Timing and timelines
5. Looking to the future

6 March 2015

Introduction and context

CAFOD would like to thank you very much for all the time, energy and commitment you have put into responding to our recent proposals. We already know how much volunteers care about CAFOD and in particular about the mission we carry out together - to overcome global poverty and injustice.

CAFOD really appreciates and values all your feedback, and we feel both humbled and honoured to have heard so many of your stories about the importance of CAFOD's mission in your life, and of course, as a key part of your faith.

The huge volume of response to the consultation confirms your commitment to CAFOD's work. The passion with which volunteers have replied to the proposals reminds us how much you care, and how strongly you feel.

The Trustees and Directors are responsible for ensuring that CAFOD effectively carries out the mission entrusted to it by being at the service of those most in need. This involves careful and ongoing reflection about the prudent stewardship of resources entrusted to CAFOD.

This work springs from our faith, and is a way of expressing our love for God and neighbour so that every one of God's children has the opportunity to flourish and reach his or her full human potential.

Reflecting on a rapidly changing world and a re-assessment of our own resources, CAFOD undertook a review of how best to realise our ambition to achieve a just and fair world. Alongside feedback received from volunteers we have listened to input from our international partners and key public figures, clergy and lay people in the Catholic community and our colleagues in England and Wales and overseas.

We wanted to ensure that in an increasingly unpredictable financial environment, we have the right priorities and approaches to continue responding on behalf of the Catholic community to the concerns of poor communities across the world, in the most effective ways and within available resources.

We believe very strongly in a partnership approach and our work is already well known for this. Church teaching is very clear – 'An ever more effective world solidarity should allow all peoples to become the artisans of their destiny.' (*Populorum Progressio*, #65).

Despite financial challenges we are determined to better enable poor communities to access and influence the resources and decisions which affect their lives. We have always believed our international partners are the experts in their own development and therefore the deployment of resources entrusted to us by the Catholic community must demonstrate this. The decisions we have made protect the grants to our partners internationally and allocate a smaller budget for CAFOD's running costs. They also enable us to be more flexible in responding to needs as they arise.

We are steadfast in our commitment to:

- Being more proactive in supporting the global Catholic family and its networks to challenge the 'globalisation of indifference' to which Pope Francis has referred. We have heard time and again from fellow agencies and public decision makers the important role the Church has in influencing the policies and practices which affect the most disadvantaged.
- Strengthening CAFOD's emergency response while working with local partners and through the worldwide Caritas network.
- Continuing to focus through our long term development work on overcoming extreme poverty, inequality and injustice. If expertise has been developed by partner organisations in areas of work CAFOD has previously held, CAFOD will step back and encourage partner organisations to take the lead.
- Serving those most in need regardless of their race, religion, gender or culture.
- Inspiring and resourcing the Catholic community in England and Wales to respond to our call to show solidarity with our brothers and sisters living with poverty and injustice

We have listened to and discussed all the comments and suggestions received and as part of this we have used volunteers' input to help improve, strengthen and modify proposals for our work in the Catholic community of England and Wales. This document summarises what CAFOD has heard from volunteers and the related decisions we have made.

What we heard from you

*Given that this is a **summary, drawn together by theme**, of what we heard from all volunteers who responded to the consultation, it may not address specific points that you personally raised. We hope that you will feel we have covered the major points here, but meetings with volunteers have also been arranged.*

1. Volunteering with CAFOD

Many of you welcomed the idea of more opportunities for involvement with CAFOD's work, and agreed with the aspiration to increase the numbers of volunteers. Most volunteers welcomed the idea of a variety of roles and different types of opportunity to be involved. Many mentioned the importance of attracting young people as volunteers.

However, whilst many agreed that there is potential for involving more people, it was also pointed out that it is not easy to recruit new volunteers and that existing volunteers have a lot of calls on their time already. Some doubted whether it is possible to recruit more volunteers and we heard that other organisations experience difficulties both in attracting and retaining volunteers. Some volunteers expressed reservations about the quality of the research and evidence that had been used to develop the proposals.

Volunteers agreed that their voice should be better heard and heeded within the organisation – there was a strong sense from some that you want suitable opportunities to contribute to decision-making. It is important to volunteers that your feedback is taken seriously and appropriately informs the direction of the organisation. Some volunteers wanted the opportunity for greater autonomy, more responsibility and the chance to exercise leadership.

Others felt that it was too much to ask of volunteers to take on more responsibility and some said that they already felt that they were giving as much as they could.

There were questions about how effective support through social media and other online methods could be. Some could see benefits, but others were worried it would mean less face to face contact. The CAFOD schools' volunteer website was seen as a good model to follow.

2. Stewardship

We heard that volunteers welcome the emphasis on good stewardship of the funds with which CAFOD is entrusted. Some volunteers agree that organisational running costs should be reduced, but some expressed strong views that these reductions should not be from our local work in the dioceses of England and Wales. Most thought that costs should be kept to a reasonable and effective minimum, in order to maximise the amount of money raised that can be spent on grants for long term development and emergency response, on international advocacy and

campaigns to overcome the barriers that keep people in poverty, and on education & awareness raising in England and Wales. You re-emphasised how vital it is that every pound you raise for CAFOD's work is well spent and helps CAFOD to achieve its overall aims. You expect CAFOD to exercise prudent stewardship of the gifts you give.

However, you also want to be sure that CAFOD is not reducing costs so much, nor investing so little, that income is put at risk. You told us that it is necessary to invest in attracting new volunteers, in training them and supporting them. We heard that you think it is important to invest locally in order to increase income, to develop volunteering and to inspire more parishes and schools to get involved.

Volunteers were concerned that staff should have appropriate wage levels and good terms and conditions. However, some queried the level of the Director's salary.

We heard concerns about the amount that would need to be spent on upgrading IT capacity to take into account more mobile ways of working, and the possible increase in travel costs across large regions.

Some volunteers felt that other ways of reducing costs should be explored, including wage reductions for staff, and more streamlined communications. Others suggested the possibility of a one-off appeal to increase income.

Some volunteers expressed confusion about the rationale for reducing costs, and about the actual figure for savings needed.

3. Local working relationships, offices and structures

Many volunteers thought that the size of the regions as proposed was too large, and expressed concerns that local staff in particular might be overloaded and have to travel too much - which could also be expensive. Many felt that much more emphasis should be placed on the importance of local relationships and face to face contact.

CAFOD was asked to keep in mind the differences between rural communities and urban parishes, and the cultural differences between regions e.g. between the North East and North West of England.

We heard that it is important to make sure that support for volunteers is as local as possible and that it is easily accessible. Volunteers wanted to be able to meet staff face to face on a regular basis, but also to be able to email and phone them. We heard that volunteers find local staff inspirational and their presence motivating and rewarding, as well as offering direction and support. You asked if it were possible for staff normally based in Romero House to spend more time working locally as well.

Some volunteers felt strongly that Welsh national identity was not sufficiently recognised in the proposal.

Significant concern was expressed that local knowledge would be lost and key relationships in the dioceses put at risk. Volunteers felt that visible local leadership was important. Some people expressed concern that CAFOD was too 'London-centric' and there were fears that there would be more bureaucracy, paperwork and reports, and that perhaps CAFOD was becoming what was described as 'managerial' in its culture.

Some volunteers suggested that the costs of maintaining a presence in London at Romero House were too high, and some felt that moving outside London would be a positive move.

There were also recommendations to work more closely with other organisations and share resources.

Some expressed a fear that CAFOD was trying to replace staff with volunteers.

Many volunteers were concerned that diocesan offices could be closed and felt strongly that this would damage CAFOD's local work.

4. Timing and timelines

Many volunteers expressed concern that the proposed changes would be too rushed; and some offered to work alongside current staff to make sure that nothing is lost in the transition. Many volunteers felt that the changes proposed could not be achieved in the proposed timescale and that CAFOD should slow the process down.

5. Communication

Volunteers felt that the proposals were not communicated well enough and would have liked more opportunities to participate in discussions at an earlier stage. Some suggested that the proposals were in fact a *fait accompli* and that there was not sufficient transparency in the process. Some volunteers would have liked to have seen a fuller picture of how cost savings were being made across CAFOD, and some believed that these savings were affecting the local work in England and Wales more than other parts of the organisation.

6. Connection to partners and projects

The idea of closer connections to the projects and partners that you are supporting was very much welcomed. The proposal for more visits and talks from partners was well received. Some suggested that the opportunity to visit projects and partners should also be offered, especially to young people.

CAFOD's response

We are very grateful for the feedback we have received and the commitment volunteers have shown to helping CAFOD plan for the future. We are sorry that some of you feel that we did not communicate sufficiently early in the development of the proposals. We understand that we did not communicate as well as we could have and we will learn from this process. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we work through a period of change.

We have carefully considered all your input. It has been of great value to us in reviewing our proposals. This is what we have decided in the light of your response:

1. Volunteering with CAFOD

In the proposals we shared with you, we described how we would like to work in England and Wales in future. You told us that you liked some of our ideas, but that you had significant concerns as well. We have listened to what you told us, and we have reflected on our plans in response to your feedback.

CAFOD could not do its work without the tremendous support of our current volunteers. We are keen to work with you during this time of transition and in shaping our work for the future. We want to make sure that the work volunteers do with CAFOD in England and Wales is properly valued and appreciated, and that there are more opportunities for your involvement and ways to strengthen your voice within the organisation. We will certainly not be replacing staff with volunteers.

We would like to re-affirm our belief that one of the key routes to achieving increased participation and understanding in parishes and schools is through working in partnership with volunteers. Many people value the opportunity to contribute to CAFOD's work through offering their time, skills and knowledge. We value the contribution of all our volunteers, and want to encourage more people to join us.

Volunteers have always been essential to CAFOD's work, since its very beginning. Many of us see our work, whether we are staff or volunteers, as our vocation, our calling, to serve the poorest and most disadvantaged people in the world.

We have heard from you that you find the local face to face contact with CAFOD staff invaluable for your volunteering work and we have therefore modified our original proposals.

We understand that a local connection to CAFOD through a staff member is crucial for good local working relationships within each diocese, particularly with volunteers and priests.

CAFOD wants to find ways to encourage and enable those volunteers who are seeking more responsibility and opportunities for leadership. We realise that increased responsibility does not suit everyone, and not everyone has the time to take on more. We do not propose to ask anyone to take on tasks for which they do not feel suited or equipped. CAFOD appreciates and values those who can offer

a small amount of time just as much as those who can spend more time with us. Every prayer, every action, every gift counts! But if you are interested and feel called to leadership roles, then we will welcome your involvement.

We know from our research, which included looking at examples of good practice in other organisations, that there is potential within the community to develop new forms of volunteering and to engage more, and a wider range of, volunteers in our mission. CAFOD could attract more volunteers if different types of opportunity were offered, for example, more short-term or one-off volunteering opportunities. Some people would love to volunteer, but can't commit to long-term work that would take up a lot of their time.

CAFOD wants to increase the participation of the Catholic community in its work, focusing particularly on those members of the community whom we know to be interested but as yet not as involved as they would like to be. Research gives us evidence of this interest.

Many volunteers find social media an easy and useful way of communicating with each other and with CAFOD. We will continue to build on our online communications, but we are aware that not everyone is comfortable with this, so we will also communicate in print. We are committed to maintaining and, where possible, increasing our face to face contact with volunteers. We are aware that some volunteers feel strongly that they receive too many resources. We will review this regularly with the aim of keeping resources to a minimum.

CAFOD aims to inspire all generations to participate in our mission, and we have looked for more and different ways to motivate young Catholics to become involved. We already have programmes for young adult leaders, such as Step into the Gap, which gives young people the opportunity to volunteer both here and on short-term placements with projects overseas, and the Young Leaders' Programme which is inspiring hundreds of young people to volunteer in their local communities.

We also know that it is important to bring communities and individuals in the Catholic community closer to the communities in the South with whom we work. This is inspiring for both communities here, and for the partners with whom we work. We are all engaged in the same task and we can learn a lot from each other.

We aim to build on the considerable success of current programmes and we are looking for ways to overcome the barriers and challenges which keep us from increasing the participation of parishioners, children and young people in our mission.

1A. Volunteering: the way forward

We have listened carefully to your concerns and we have modified our original proposals. We appreciate in particular your concern about maintaining a local presence in each diocese, and having a local place where volunteers can meet to plan and support each other. We list below areas in the original proposal that have been modified, and secondly we list proposals that have now been confirmed.

What has been modified from the original proposals?

- There will be a local CAFOD staff member based from a volunteer centre in every diocese in England and Wales. Local staff will be known as Community Participation Coordinators (CPC) and will be responsible for inspiring, inviting and recruiting new volunteers as well as supporting existing volunteers. They will also be responsible for other key local relationships, such as with priests, on behalf of CAFOD.
- There will be regional teams of staff, but not regional bases.
- There will be at least one volunteer centre in every diocese, which will have the necessary IT equipment.
- The CPC based in the Archdiocese of Cardiff will be known as CPC Wales, and additional resource (*in the form of a fixed-term post*) will be allocated to the Welsh dioceses in order to develop a strategy that takes full account of Welsh national identity and particular opportunities in the Welsh Church.

What is now confirmed from the original proposals?

- Volunteers will continue to be supported and encouraged by a local CAFOD staff member, who will also aim to attract more volunteers to work alongside staff to increase the participation of all parishes and schools in our overall mission.
- Local staff will work in regional teams and across more than one diocese. In this way, we aim to reduce the isolation of staff and enable them to receive good levels of support from each other and from their managers. We also want to encourage the sharing of information and good practice. There will be 4 regions (North East, South East, North West & Wales, and South West & Wales). Each regional team will have a manager, who will hold overall responsibility for that region.
- It is not possible with the resources we have to maintain current levels of core staffing across all the dioceses. We very much regret that it is necessary to reduce posts. Current staffing levels are 37.4 full time equivalent posts. From 1 August 2015 there will be 26.5 full time equivalent posts based locally, as well as 5 fixed term posts for the next 2 years and one fixed term post for 1 year. Fixed-term posts mean that we can ensure ongoing costs do not increase, whilst still enabling us to respond to particular opportunities when we can afford to do so. We shall do our very best to support and offer other opportunities for our valued colleagues whose current roles are being discontinued, but sadly we do recognise that it may not be possible for everyone to find a suitable alternative within CAFOD.
- Two diocesan offices will need to be re-located, because contracts are coming to an end and we are being asked to vacate the premises. These are in Brentwood and East Anglia. We are committed to maintaining a volunteer centre in each diocese, and this will continue to be the current office for the time being. However, we will be reviewing locations in the

short to medium term to ensure that these centres are in the most appropriate place for the work. Costs will form part of the criteria for deciding on location.

- We will organise more visits from our overseas partners and international staff.
- Staff who are based in Romero House will be working locally and face to face more often. For example, our professional fundraisers will attend volunteer meetings regularly in order to listen to you, as well as to encourage you in your fundraising and explain any new ideas.
- We will develop more opportunities for volunteers to become local leaders, and we will seek to develop fora for discussion and opportunities for volunteers to be involved in CAFOD's decision making - if they so choose.
- We will develop different types of opportunity for volunteering that recognise people have different needs and interests.
- We will seek to increase the number of people who volunteer with CAFOD. We know from our research that the potential is there. We expect numbers to grow incrementally over the next 3-5 years, and we expect modest growth in the next 2 years.
- We will reduce the number of administrative tasks expected of local staff by re-allocating these tasks to staff at Romero House. This is expected to free up staff time to spend with volunteers and local contacts.

1B. What does this mean for me as a volunteer?

All volunteers can expect strong support from both local and national programme staff. There will be a CAFOD staff person based from a volunteer centre in each diocese. National staff will spend more time working locally with volunteers, and there will also be more visits from international staff and partners.

Volunteers will be offered briefing/information sharing, training and access to meeting spaces with appropriate IT equipment. They will also receive good quality induction and information about the variety of opportunities available to them. There will be opportunities - *for those who wish* - to provide feedback to the organisation and be more involved in decision making. There will be more opportunities - again for those who wish - to take on local leadership roles (*like the current deanery coordinator or schools coordinator roles*).

The first point of contact for most volunteers will be their local Community Participation Coordinator.

Community Participation Coordinators (CPCs) will be responsible for the induction and regular briefing (e.g. before Fast Days) of volunteers in their region, including both parish and 'key' volunteers.¹ Schools volunteers, youth volunteers, campaign

¹ **'Key' volunteers are:**

a. Parishioners who are willing to work outside their own parish e.g. deanery coordinator, schools volunteer coordinator
b. Office volunteers
c. Youth volunteers
d. Schools volunteers
e. Campaign organisers
f. Media volunteers

organisers and media volunteers can continue to expect support and training from national programmes in addition to their local support. Specialist volunteers, such as MP Correspondents and prayer writers, will continue to be supported by the relevant national programme. The new post of Volunteer Support Coordinator will be responsible for the induction of volunteers working in or from Romero House in London.

1C. What does this mean for local staff?

Community Participation Coordinators will work from a diocesan volunteer centre. They will also work across more than one diocese in support of other staff members in their regional team. Each staff member will belong to a regional team. There will be 4 regional teams.

These regions will be: the North West & Wales, North East, South West and Wales, and South East.

1. The **North-West & Wales** region will be responsible for the following dioceses: Lancaster; Liverpool; Shrewsbury; Salford; Wrexham
2. The **North-East** region will be responsible for the following dioceses: Hallam; Hexham & Newcastle; Leeds; Middlesbrough; Nottingham
3. The **South West and Wales** region will be responsible for the following dioceses: Birmingham; Cardiff & Menevia; Clifton; Northampton; Plymouth
4. The **South East** region will be responsible for the following dioceses: Arundel and Brighton; Brentwood; East Anglia; Portsmouth; Southwark, and Westminster.

2. Stewardship

Whilst supporters have continued to be extremely generous in support of CAFOD's work during a time of great economic uncertainty our overall income is less predictable, with underlying costs taking an increased percentage of our income and inflation in the global South steadily decreasing our funding for our international partners as a proportion of our overall expenditure. In addition the Government has announced that the current Programme Partnership Agreement grants will come to an end in March 2016. We do not know what will follow and we cannot depend on this income as we plan ahead.

We must therefore develop a more flexible financial model with reduced ongoing core budgets and an increased focus on time limited investment spending.

CAFOD's new approach gives us the opportunity to respond more effectively to fluctuations in income whilst still prioritising key areas of work and planning to increase partner grants. We are therefore committed to finding cost savings of around £3 million in a strategic and focused way.

Savings in costs are proposed right across CAFOD's work. *Savings in our work in the Catholic community of England and Wales account for about 15% of the total.*

We believe that the salaries offered by CAFOD are just and appropriate and we are accredited as a Living Wage employer. Salaries for senior staff at CAFOD are amongst the lowest in this area of work and no employee is currently paid more than 4 times the lowest paid in the organisation.

We understand your concerns about the investment in a London base (Romero House) and we have heard the calls by some to consider moving. A move out of London was considered by Trustees and Directors five years ago and on balance we decided against this option. It was not only redundancy costs and upheaval to over 200 staff and their families that influenced our decision, but also other factors necessary for our work such as easy access to an excellent international travel hub. Romero House has won awards for sustainable design and is 70% cheaper to run than our previous building. It has a better working environment and excellent public transport links. Because we own the building it is not a drain on annual budgets. Romero House also offers wider social and practical benefits to Catholic community networks who are encouraged to use the building for meetings and events. Volunteers work alongside staff in Romero House, as well as in local offices across England and Wales.

Through the changes we are making we are focused on the long-term sustainability of CAFOD's work. We are not responding to a short-term crisis in income. We are grateful to all those who have suggested in their feedback that CAFOD should hold a one-off appeal to increase income in the short term. But the Catholic community in England and Wales is already giving very generously, and it is up to CAFOD to make sure that what is given is used in the most effective and sustainable way. CAFOD is committed to serving all our communities across England and Wales, but we must reduce our core costs.

It is our intention to protect CAFOD's income in order to maintain and indeed increase grants to partners overseas. We aim gradually to increase income over the next 5 years.

3. Working together

We believe that inspiring, encouraging, resourcing and enabling the participation of the Catholic community in the Church's mission to overcome poverty and injustice is the key purpose of our work in England and Wales. This work springs from our faith, and is a way of expressing our love for God and neighbour. We want to enable that sense of connection to our neighbour to flourish and develop. We aim to bring together communities in the global North and South in a common mission, to end the scandal of poverty and to ensure that every one of God's children has the chance to flourish and reach his or her full human potential.

CAFOD will continue to be deeply rooted in the Catholic community in England and Wales, to listen and learn, and to build effective and lasting partnerships with

individuals, parishes, schools and other organisations. CAFOD will continue to offer ways to understand the often complex reasons behind global poverty and injustice and will continue to invite the Catholic community into reflection and action with us, including prayer, giving and campaigning for change.

Together we are working towards what the Church calls 'integral and authentic development' – the flourishing of all human persons, including ourselves, as part of an intricate and interdependent web of creation. Every human person, made in the image and likeness of God, is to be valued by us all and so we reject the 'globalisation of indifference.'

4. Timing and timelines

We understand volunteers' concerns about the speed of change, but we do not want to extend the period of uncertainty for staff. The new working arrangements will begin on 1 August 2015 (rather than 1 July as originally proposed) and we anticipate a transitional period of up to two years.

5. Looking to the future

CAFOD is grateful to all those who have participated in this consultation about the best way forward. We have been moved by your commitment and passion for the work. With your support we believe that we can inspire more people to join us in the fight to overcome poverty and injustice. We will raise our voices alongside the poorest people in the world and demand change. We will show the world that we care, that we are not indifferent, and that every human person and the whole of creation matters and must be valued.

"The Church, guided by the Gospel of mercy and by love for mankind, hears the cry for justice and intends to respond to it with all her might". (Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium #54)

"In this context we can understand Jesus' command to his disciples: "You yourselves give them something to eat!" (Mk 6:37): it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter. The word "solidarity" is a little worn and at times poorly understood, but it refers to something more than a few sporadic acts of generosity. It presumes the creation of a new mind set which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few." (Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium #188)

Tom O'Connor

6th March 2015