

CAFOD Management Response to Gender Review Report – March 2015

Overview

This management response was developed by CAFOD to ensure the recommendations of the Gender Review are followed up and lessons learnt are integrated in ongoing planning. The review was carried out between June and August 2014 by an independent consultant, Marilyn Thomson, under the guidance of a Gender Review Steering Group led by CAFOD's Gender Adviser. Her findings and recommendations can be found in the [Gender Review report](#).

Of the 23 recommendations made by review, we accept 19 (82%), partially accept 2 (9%), and 2 (9%) are 'not yet unconfirmed' (ie we are not yet in a position to respond clearly on how we intend to proceed), relating to the timing of this management response. None are rejected. Our response to these has in part been determined by the outcomes of a major internal strategic review which resulted in a Strategic Intent proposal document, *Towards 2020: New Ways of Achieving Just One World*. At the time of the Gender Review, this was under a formal consultation process with staff which has now concluded. *Towards 2020* decisions have had a bearing on key areas relating to several recommendations, including how and from where we resource provision of support to staff and partners on gender as a corporate priority. Our response also reflects CAFOD's understanding of its explanatory role in contributing to understandings of Gender within CARITAS and the wider Church – this continues to be a gradual process influencing the way the Church and its agencies perceive issues when approaching them through the lens of gender as a concept and language.

Our overall response

We welcome the findings of this review as representing a well-founded and balanced assessment of CAFOD's current progress towards its gender policy and strategy commitments. Our full or partial acceptance of the recommendations, and supporting commentary (below), reflects that we are building from or addressing many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by the review, and have learned valuable lessons for the future in term of how to manage and support work on gender equality as a key corporate priority under *Just One World* in ways that align with *Towards 2020*.

We are pleased to see affirmation of the relevance of our gender mainstreaming efforts for poor and disadvantaged communities, and the appropriateness of our Gender policy and strategy and Gender Community of Practice in enabling delivery on this through our partnerships. We are especially excited by the Review's confirmation of evidence that significant results and progress have been achieved at staff and partner levels – in terms of capacity, awareness and influence – and most importantly in transformative change at community level, particularly through our gender targeted programmes focusing on ensuring women's voices are heard and exercised in leadership, supporting their participation in decision-making, reducing gender-based violence and enhancing more equitable access to resources.

However, we also accept that there has been variability in the effectiveness of our gender mainstreaming efforts, with some challenges and gaps remaining around resourcing and accessing support, and with room for improvement in some areas, eg in more realistic assessment and resourcing of technical capacity, both in relation to our partners, and CAFOD itself.

The review has been a particularly important opportunity for us to maintain and an organisational-wide conversation about our gender work, and to actively promote this dialogue across partners, programmes and other CAFOD teams. The external perspective of the reviewer and the insights she provided from her wider experience and expertise have been valuable for us at organisational and divisional levels, and reinforced our internal learning processes, which include discussing the key findings and recommendations with our International Programmes Committee which oversees our international work. Reflections from this have fed into our response.

Response to specific recommendations¹

Recommendation ²	Accept, partially accept or reject?	Our response
1. Drivers of Change		
<p>1.1 Continued central provision of technical gender assistance to programmes, partners and staff to fully embed gender within the organisation.</p>	<p>Partially reject/Partially accept</p>	<p>CAFOD remains committed to fully embedding gender across all its work and recognises that the task of gender mainstreaming is never ‘finished’ and requires ongoing support. However, our <i>Towards 2020</i> commitments confirm a two-year transition phase to shift its investment in core-funded gender technical support from a centrally-provided resource towards investment models which enable partners and staff to access locally-sourced support and technical input, including via peer-to-peer processes and South-South exchanges of gender expertise and capacity among partners. This process of devolution is likely to require identifying ‘strategic partners’ able to lead on gender, as well as establishing clear standards of practice, knowledge and capacity expected of partners and programmes funded by CAFOD’s supporters and institutional donors.</p> <p>This shift does not preclude continued provision of support from the centre, or alternative forms of investment (eg via cost-recovery through time-bound donor-funded and centrally-held initiatives) but it will mean a time limit on core-funded investment in this to end March 2017. This timeframe allows for continued implementation of gender work already under way, the development of new ways of working in line with <i>Towards 2020</i> and an opportunity to develop funding sources to meet ongoing needs and reflect the unique importance of gender as a development issue. During this time, we will also explore, design and develop the role of internal ‘champions’ to help ensure that gender is given sufficient resource to maintain its profile as a corporate, as well as international programme, priority. Responsibilities for such roles would need to be reflected in job descriptions, work plans and performance management processes. However, we accept that such champion roles are to supplement, rather than replace, dedicated gender technical support.</p> <p>This transition will also determine effective ways of working to ensure the best available resources and networks for accessing technical support on gender can be appropriately sourced. Where dedicated gender technical capacity is required by specific country programmes we will need to identify whether it can be provided through existing in-country/-region specialist programme staff, by partners accessing technical support in their country or region, or by local consultancies. Either way, we aim to protect provision of such ‘frontline’ gender technical capacity wherever it is needed, while areas of technical provision that are time bound and dedicated to centrally-</p>

¹ The recommendations can be found on pages 34-35 of the Review report.

² The numbering sequence in the table reflects that used by the review consultant in the report.

		<p>held funding contracts, central provision may be appropriately resourced via time-bound investment and/or cost-recovery.</p> <p>In managing this transition, we accept the Review’s concerns that gender mainstreaming requires an ongoing approach to work rather than being tackled as a stand-alone or time-bound ‘theme’. It deals with changes in social and cultural norms, mindsets and behaviours and that adequate time and skill-sets are required to address these, particularly in the context of the challenges that the gender-faith nexus brings with it. Gender models and strategies for realising <i>Towards 2020</i> are now being developed by CAFOD’s Gender Adviser and will be further developed over the transition period in consultation with programme teams, alongside a clear assessment of the risks of devolution that will need to be mitigated, managed or accepted whilst delivering on its potential benefits and to ensure high quality gender mainstreaming is preserved.</p>
1.2 Continued leadership from senior management on gender by publicly supporting and communicating commitment to gender equality and providing adequate financial and human resources to implement the corporate gender policy and procedures.	Accept	CAFOD’s Strategic Intent commits us to maintaining gender mainstreaming as a corporate priority under our strategic framework, <i>Just One World</i> , and to delivering on our corporate gender policy and strategy. CAFOD’s leadership group will ensure that a clear assessment of ongoing resourcing needs will be made during the strategic intent transition period (April 2015-March 2017) to ensure its effective delivery both during and beyond the transition period to new ways of working. This will include ensuring that staff and partners are able to access support and ensure effective delivery of CAFOD’s gender commitments. While it is anticipated that there will be an ongoing need for gender work beyond March 2017 it is not yet clear what form this will take. Future resourcing of this will depend on how different CAFOD’s future gender advisory and technical support needs are to those currently being provided by existing roles as well as availability of funding.
1.3 The timeline of the corporate gender policy should be aligned to the corporate strategic framework.	Accept	We will align the timeline of our corporate gender policy and strategy to the remaining period of our 2010-2020 corporate strategic framework and the implementation plan for realising our <i>Towards 2020</i> vision. This will allow for the clearer definition of short-to-medium and long-term goals and indicators, the latter being particularly relevant in recognising the time it takes to change social norms, attitudes and behaviours relating to gender. Work on this has started under our <i>Just One World</i> Evidencing Framework (<i>Insight</i>) which includes, for example, key performance indicators for assessing project-level compliance with CAFOD’s core gender standards and the extent to which key partners are implementing agreed recommendations arising from gender audits.
1.4 Formation of a Gender Monitoring Group of representatives from across the organisation to review annual divisional	Partially accept	Rather than form a new cross-organisational group, which risks adding to the complexity of managing many other such groups already in place to oversee a number of issues, responsibility for monitoring progress with the implementation of the gender policy in their work areas – and compliance with agreed core standards – will be held by the heads of CAFOD’s operational groups who will collectively monitor top-line gender indicators reflected in our <i>Insight</i> framework and report on these at appropriate intervals to CAFOD’s Leadership Group

and departmental reports on gender.		and Board. A dashboard tool has been developed for relevant operational management groups to enable this and will be rolled out from April 2015.
1.5 Gender questions should form part of staff performance appraisal systems.	Accept	We will adopt the <i>Suggestions for Managers</i> document developed by our Gender Adviser as a mandatory performance management tool for this purpose.
2. Capacity and awareness		
2.1 Follow up gender training for Heads of Regions	Accept	We will ensure that such follow-up training includes all managers, not only heads of regions, and be linked to our response to recommendation 1.5 on including gender questions in staff performance appraisals. Commitment to gender equality and relevant gender competencies will form part of all managers' job descriptions and competency profiles. During the Strategic Intent transition phase we will assess how best to ensure all Heads of Regions and Country Representatives are able to provide an enabling environment for work on gender in each of the regions and offices, eg through concrete actions reflected in staff workplans.
2.2 Face-to-face meeting and training of trainers for community of practice (COP) members	Accept	To-date our Gender Community of Practice (CoP), which has representation from all regions of CAFOD's international work, has met face-to-face just once over the last five years. This included partner facilitated sessions, training-of-trainers for members, and sharing of programme experience, tools and funding opportunities which resulted in a multi-country gender and church programme. Since then, to minimise costs, the CoP has successfully 'met' virtually on a quarterly basis. During the transition period, we will convene one face-to-face meeting and TOT for the gender CoP members as part of the skills-transfer process and will include key partner staff from the host region. CoP members will also be asked to further support the transition by providing a gender capacity partner mapping in their respective countries.
2.3 Continued capacity building for staff, going beyond programmes, ie include diocesan and advocacy staff to be better equipped and confident to address the faith-gender challenges.	Accept	CAFOD recognises that gender mainstreaming does not stop at programmes and partners but, in order to be meaningful and sustainable, must cut across all activities and levels of the organisation, including its policies, procedures, structures and systems. We recognise the need for capacity and confidence building (for both CAFOD and partner staff), especially in relation to influencing male church leaders on gender issues. We also accept that the challenges emerging from the faith-gender nexus range from programme practice to the language used in describing interventions and experiences. We will therefore ensure staff are capacitated to recognise and address existing sensitivities and reputational risks, particularly for external facing work (policy, advocacy, media etc). How we manage reputational risk will be important to consider as we transition to <i>Towards 2020</i> , especially given the time-bound investment in central support functions and the need to retain support for England and Wales facing functions as we devolve our gender mainstreaming support function.

3. Corporate gender mainstreaming

Advocacy & communications

<p>3.1 Build on the current momentum of raised organisational profile and external perception; donor climate DFID gender focus, FCO interest, post 2015 gender focus.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>The continued resourcing of such corporate and cross-organisational aspects of gender mainstreaming will be carefully considered as part of the <i>Towards 2020</i> transition process. This will be part of the exploration around the role of ‘internal champions’ responsible for maintaining CAFOD’s profile on gender within the sector and ensuring appropriate resourcing for this. The feasibility of this proposal will be tested during the transition given the need for such champions to have sufficient skills, capacity and time to deliver on the corporate and external facing gender mainstreaming functions.</p> <p>We are encouraged by the Review finding that, as a result of CAFOD’s external engagement on gender to-date, we are perceived by external stakeholders as a Catholic agency with a clear voice on gender. This is especially important, given that Catholic agencies historically tend to be perceived by the UN, secular and feminist circles as ‘fundamentalist’ and that similar misperceptions can exist within the Catholic church about secular approaches to gender. We are keen to continue to act as a bridge between secular and faith-based stakeholders, and having established links on both ‘sides’, we believe we are in a good position to mediate both perspectives of the debate. Our active membership within the UK Gender and Development Network and our co-chairing of the Network’s Gender Mainstreaming Working Group, provide key vehicles for us to continue engagement with external stakeholders, particularly DFID and on the post-2015 agenda, alongside other UK-based advocacy NGOs.</p>
<p>3.2 Increase participation in external faith based networks (eg CIDSE, We will Speak out etc) and maintain overview and participation in the international gender debate in order to feed back lessons and trends to CAFOD headquarters and all regions.</p>	<p>Accept</p>	<p>Our membership of, and collaboration with, faith-based networks will continue to be strategically important for CAFOD and partners for joint lobbying purposes and for wider external recognition of the role faith-based organisations play in eliminating gender injustices.</p> <p>For instance, we recently helped generate momentum with the UK government’s Foreign and Commonwealth Office following the global summit on sexual violence, by creating the opportunity to involve partner church leaders to an upcoming international interfaith meeting on the issue. Strong representation of CAFOD partners at this high level event is expected. Another example is the CIDSE Secretariat, which has drawn on CAFOD’s gender policy and our Gender Adviser sits on their advisory team to collaborate on how to address sensitive gender issues such as sexual and reproductive health and rights. A joint internal paper is planned in order to support CIDSE members to take forward work on gender and be better equipped to deal with the sensitive nature of this work given the current global focus on population and development (DFID’s golden moment on family planning; post 2015 discussions etc.).</p> <p>More engagement is needed with the wider Caritas network to promote gender equality collectively. A good start has been made in this respect through the pan-African gender and church programme that has resulted in</p>

		<p>the Kenyan Bishops signing off their own gender policy. The development of a gender and church learning pack for staff and partners will be vital in this context.</p> <p>Under our Strategic Intent we will build on the relationships we have established with these networks to further identify and create stronger linkages at country level, including through the WWSO (We Will Speak Out) and Restored coalitions of which CAFOD is a member. These faith based networks will also be crucial in the identification of specialist gender organisations that can be locally sourced to support our transition.</p>
3.3 Technical support should be institutionalised for public gender days exhibitions and production of gender material to share learning from projects with supporters and wide public audience.	Not yet confirmed	This will be explored during the transition planning period. We acknowledge the need for support to this (staff capacity and financing), particularly from CAFOD’s Creative and Communication Section, to enable key gender communications and learning to be published, eg via the production of gender and church learning and influencing videos, translated gender policy and gender communication leaflets, for internal gender awareness raising and web-based exhibitions. To-date such support has been provided ad-hoc and informally so formal planning and budgeting around this will be needed to ensure support to this during transition.
3.4 Increased visibility of gender work on website is recommended	Accept	Discussions are underway with our website team to assess how best to link existing gender case studies with country information pages hosted on our corporate website. We may need to negotiate the relocation of our ‘thematic’ pages on the website, including gender, to ensure higher visibility.
Organisational culture		
3.5 HR to communicate progress in implementation of the Action Plan from the leadership report and other employment related issues arising in this review.	Not yet confirmed	Although the Review focused primarily on gender mainstreaming within our international programmes, many of the issues it raised reflected learning from our 2013 Gender in Leadership study, which led to a number of procedures being put in place to address recommendations arising from this. However, the Review echoed a number of issues which remain to be explored in this area, eg as to whether CAFOD is sufficiently addressing the needs of staff with caring responsibilities, so we will continue to review these corporately with the support of our Organisational Development and People division.
4. Programmes		
4.1 Incentives and accountability mechanisms put in place. Each division should identify indicators in their divisional/departmental/team work plans to monitor the	Accept	We recognise the important role incentives and accountability mechanisms can play in ensuring our gender policy and strategy do not risk evaporation amidst the busyness of our day-to-day work. Incentives appropriate to our identity and values will be explored as part of our transition planning, alongside identifying appropriate accountability measures for ensuring gender support needs are effectively identified and addressed across all management groups. The follow through on Key Performance Indicators under our <i>Insight</i> Framework will play a key part in this from 2015, but we will also review the potential usefulness of other forms of incentive and recognition, such as linking gender into staff performance objectives and performance management reviews, staff participation in international conferences, publications, and gender profile-raising in internal newsletters.

implementation of the gender strategy.		
4.2 Sex disaggregated data, gender analysis and efforts to address strategic gender needs form part of minimum standards for all programmes.	Accept	Work at an organisational level is underway to ensure core standards on gender are included in our thematic standards work which will form part of our <i>Insight</i> Framework and our Programme Cycle Management (PCM) approach and related WebPromise database system which are now being updated. In finalising and testing these we will explore the usefulness of a 'step ladder approach' to foundational thematic standards and compare our approaches with those of other agencies.
4.3 M&E systems should measure impact and benefits for: 1) women's participation and empowerment; 2) equitable access to and control over resources and decision making; 3) changes in power relations; and 4) changes in discriminating gender attitudes.	Accept	This is a very timely suggestion given our current work to develop Key Performance Indicators for CAFOD's <i>Insight</i> Framework and our PCM and WebPromise updating projects. One of the gender KPIs relating to this is to 'tag' projects in all four categories proposed that demonstrate transformative change on gender. This and other indicators will be tested before roll out in 2015.
4.4 Mechanisms to be put in place to (a) assess staff attitudes to gender (e.g. surveys) and (b) assess ability to manage programmes and staff in gender sensitive manner promoting gender responsive programming	Accept	This resonates with findings from our 2013 study on gender in leadership and will be picked up in our design of future staff and partner surveys and gender training for managers.
4.5 Ensure technical support is provided to address gender capacity needs identified in revised programmes and C/RSPs and in countries where	Accept	We are committed as part of our approval process to ensuring that our Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) are appropriately engendered, and commit to gender mainstreaming in ways relevant to programme and partner contexts. Our annual CSP reflections on progress with implementing them will include reflection on gender and guidance will be provided to support this. Our Gender Community of Practice members will be asked to support this process, especially for countries where progress on gender is felt to be weak.

understanding of gender is still weak.		
4.6 New programmes and projects to build in budgets in both core and institutional funds for technical gender support.	Accept	This recommendation is core to taking forward our 2020 Strategic Intent. Earmarking financial resources at planning stage for gender activities in each regional and country programme will be key to enabling gender audits, training and participation in gender related conferences and events to take place. Options for cost recovery of gender mainstreaming functions will be explored with relevant institutional donors and in the design of funding proposals and budgets, particularly where there is strong donor commitment to gender and a post-2015 focus on gender.
4.7 Increased support for humanitarian programmes through tailored gender training and accompaniment during an emergency	Partially accept	In our transition planning we will identify how best to support humanitarian staff and partners, focusing on practical advice which can enable a realistic focus on gender in the early stages of emergency response. This will include, for instance, ensuring staff and partners are better prepared for dealing with issues of sexual violence against women in major emergencies and facilitating better involvement of women in decision making processes. CAFOD's needs assessments tools and processes will provide key entry points for addressing gender aspects in humanitarian response. Improved needs assessment will lead to better incorporation of gender issues in humanitarian response programming, which will also ensure gender issues are a more specific focus of monitoring and evaluation.
5. Partners		
5.1 Selection criteria for new partners should include commitment to gender equality	Accept	As part of our <i>Towards 2020</i> transition planning, new gender specialist partners will be identified with roles/responsibilities and resourcing for these negotiated. Ways of incentivising partners to provide peer support on gender to other partners will also be considered. Our partner selection processes already include assessing partners' commitment to gender equality – this 'commitment' means sharing CAFOD's values and concerns for gender equality, dignity and justice, rather than necessarily having gender capacities and existing activities already in place. However, this requirement will be reflected in our PCM work on core standards in projects so that this commitment can also be reflected and monitored at project level.
5.2 Gender questions should form part of partner monitoring visits.	Accept	Our PCM guidance on monitoring visits to partners and projects will be updated to reflect this. This also relates to our response to recommendations 1.5 and 2.1 regarding gender questions in staff performance appraisals.
5.3 More resources for south-south partner gender learning particularly in the context of faith based perspective.	Accept	This recommendation resonates well with our <i>Towards 2020</i> Strategic Intent. Useful learning can be drawn from our existing pan-Africa gender and church programme. However, cross-programme/-country partner learning exchange will need to be adequately resourced and managed as we transition our sourcing of gender technical support. The coordination costs required for this will be factored into budgeting of core funds, strategic investment planning, and future institutional funding opportunities, including provision for partner-led peer-to-peer reviews in programme/project proposals.