

CAFOD GENDER REVIEW

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CAFOD's International Programmes Committee (IPC) commissioned this review of CAFOD's work on gender equality to help CAFOD and the IPC understand more about the difference that CAFOD-supported work is making in relation to gender equality. This is a follow up to a comprehensive review carried out in 2008, which recommended embedding gender equality adequately in CAFOD's vision, mission, values and international priorities to enable staff to effectively incorporate gender considerations into their planning and implementation of regional and country strategies and programmes. In addition to achieving most of the 2008 review recommendations, this review also identified other milestones as well as challenges and gaps in taking forward gender work in the past five years.

Progress and Achievements

1. Drivers of change

Corporate commitment and gender champions: The corporate leadership is supportive of working toward gender equality demonstrated by the firm integration of gender into the corporate strategic framework Just One World making it a corporate priority with the need to deliver on it. Having the commitment of senior management and a gender champion within the leadership team has greatly supported gender being taken forward within the organisation.

Corporate Gender Policy and Strategy: Having a gender policy and strategy in place is a major achievement. It involved a wide organisational consultation, sets out clear implementation guidelines and indicators for all of CAFOD and uses gender terminology framed within Church teachings and values.

Gender Community of Practice: Prior to the 2008 review, the gender community of practice (COP) only met once a year. In 2009 it was institutionalised and now meets virtually every quarter with a set agenda, minutes, a rotating chair and collaborates to achieve the gender COP work plan. In 2010 a budget was made available to bring together COP members for a training of trainers to develop skills on gender and share learning across the regions resulting in and paving the way for action planning, including the development and funding of the pan African Gender and Church programme which led to the Kenya Episcopal Conference Gender policy.

2. Capacity and Awareness

Support to programme staff to develop capacity on gender has increased through improved inductions, trainings, access to gender mainstreaming and planning tools. The Gender Adviser provides input into programme proposals and country and regional strategy papers and has increased opportunities to exchange good practice and challenges between programme staff. This has led to improvements in partner support through monitoring and evaluation systems, gender audits and advocacy strategies.

To deepen staff awareness, public gender days have been institutionalised through yearly in-house and website exhibitions. This has resulted in a wealth of partner communication material on gender to draw from for learning purposes, which was not available five years ago.

3. External influencing

CAFOD is being recognised by external stakeholders as a faith based agency with a voice on gender. Through CAFOD's representation and engagement with DFID, FCO and as part of the faith based 'We Will Speak Out Coalition', CIDSE and other networks, CAFOD's credibility and reputation in the international debates has been raised, demonstrating how much Catholic agencies can contribute to these debates despite existing differences in approaches to family and fertility.

4. Corporate gender mainstreaming

Advocacy and Communications: The Gender Adviser is a member in CAFOD's governance COP and the CIDSE gender advisory group, she receives and responds to regular media requests on gender issues, which raises public awareness of the significant role CAFOD and church partners play in addressing gender injustices.

Strategic links are being built with dioceses which run local gender fundraising events. This year's Plymouth 'Fun Run for Women' raised awareness of gender inequality in 12 schools with 5,000 participant runners and has good potential for scale up.

Organisational culture: CAFOD is one amongst few agencies that was open to scrutinising its own internal gender equality practices by commissioning the gender balance in leadership research seeking to put its own house in order and being transparent in sharing and discussing results with all staff.

5. International Programmes

A gender lens has been incorporated into various existing tools and policies resulting in greater attention to gender equality in Country and Regional Strategy Papers (C/RSPs) than five years ago. Most of the recently revised C/RSPs have addressed gender in their planned activities and some have identified gender specific programmes. The allocation of funding for work on gender is a good example of CAFOD's investment in Programme Quality showing positive results. New sources of funds, donor priorities and collaboration with the institutional funding team led to an increase in gender focussed proposals resulting in stronger prominence of gender in programmes, including the following three multi-country programmes:

The **Gender and Church** programme brings together learning from five countries and has resulted in great advances being made by CAFOD in promoting gender equality within church structures. Gender audits led to the appointment of gender focal points in each diocese, gender sensitisation sessions for all staff, selected clergy and community members including potential female leaders. **The Kenya Episcopal Conference (KEC) gender policy** is being implemented into practical action plans.

The Gender and Water Programme (WASH) programme encourages programme staff and partners to develop gender-aware water programmes supporting projects in 17 countries in 4 regions. In all these projects gender is being mainstreamed into indicators, activities and targets.

The pan African **Action for Better Governance (ABG)** programme is supporting Church partners to empower women from disadvantaged groups to have a say in decision-making in the wider community programmes. The Gender Adviser's presence in the ABG 2 programme development meeting resulted in gender being prioritised.

6. Gender mainstreaming with partners

CAFOD partners are moving forward and many have developed organisational gender policies and reflect gender within monitoring and evaluation systems. Some innovative gender related programme strategies have been introduced demonstrating a clear commitment of some partners to address power imbalances at community level and within governance structures. The Gender Adviser supports partners in gender mainstreaming in a variety of ways such as planning and facilitating gender training co-facilitated with COP members, supporting local staff with tools and insights, assessing new proposals and on-going projects with a gender lens and sharing learning from partners from the other regions, the wider CAFOD and gender networks and international debates. CAFOD's specific niche on gender is through contextualising its gender work within Church teachings, which has gained societal acceptance in more traditional communities. Examination of documentation of projects across the five regions shows many positive results which are highlighted in this review.

- **Women’s voices heard and exercising influence:** Evidence of change and transformation is strongest in gender targeted projects focusing on women’s leadership skills and participation in decision-making. These projects have strong gender indicators in the proposals.
- **Women visible and counted:** The current Web Promise cycle demonstrates that 302 out of the overall 751 projects have a focus on women and girls. Sex disaggregated data facilitates visibility and measurement.
- **Women/girls getting fair or equal benefits from resources, services and opportunities:** Through the introduction of a gender lens into WASH projects partners are starting to address power relationships in communities e.g. women in water user committees taking leadership roles; there is evidence of an increase in partners addressing strategic gender issues.
- **Women’s/ girls needs/ rights upheld through targeted interventions:** There is evidence that partners are addressing gender based violence in all regions in various forms in targeted interventions.

Challenges and gaps

The findings from this review show that challenges remain to be addressed in order to achieve a satisfactory level of gender mainstreaming across the organisation. Work on gender is about addressing social norms, changing attitudes and behaviours which will take time and continuing commitment. Experience from other organisations shows that in order to keep the organisation and staff engaged on gender it needs to be a part of strategic decision making and planning.

1. Drivers of change

Gender Policy and Strategy: Successful implementation of the gender policy will depend on effective monitoring of key performance indicators in the Just One World Evidencing Framework (JOWEF). A challenge is whether managers will have the capacity and time to deliver this.

There are no dedicated posts in any of the country offices across the globe with gender in the job title. Although some gender focal points have considerable technical expertise on gender, others have much less and need a lot of support from the Gender Adviser.

2. Capacity and awareness

Developing staff capacity on gender needs to be sustained: gender stereotyped attitudes still persist among some staff and many still lack an understanding of the concepts and practices of gender mainstreaming and are not confident to address gender with partners, especially church partners and church authorities. Similar issues around capacity and lack of awareness exists in the diocesan context.

3. External influencing and networking

The faith-gender interface comes with many challenges ranging from programme practice to the very language used in describing interventions and experiences. This requires constant vigilance, sensitivity and regular engagement with global stakeholders in order to balance out expectations and challenges from different perspectives.

4. Corporate gender mainstreaming

Advocacy and communications: The widespread perception in international debates by the UN, secular and feminist circles is polarised. Catholic agencies are viewed as ‘fundamentalist’ on certain issues and it is important that CAFOD challenges this stance, particularly in light of the current global focus on population and development and the Post 2015 discussions. International bodies and funders need to recognise that Catholic agencies are valuable allies in the fight against gender injustices.

Organisational culture: The perception of some staff is that there is a glass ceiling, not all managers nurture and encourage female staff to apply for management posts and it is difficult for women to progress in their careers. There was a sense of unfairness expressed by several staff members that flexible working practices are not applied consistently across the board.

5. Programmes

Accountability Systems: Even programmes that have addressed gender in the design stages can struggle in translating gender commitments into action and impact. Weaknesses were identified in ensuring adherence to gender related minimum standards to demonstrate effectiveness of programme work on gender. It is therefore difficult to assess if and how programmes are moving from a practical needs to a strategic gender needs approach, to identify impact on women's empowerment and changes in power relations.

Challenges of working with Church leaders: Lack of understanding of the concept of gender and at times resistance by church leaders was considered to be a challenge in programme work in most regions. It is important to work with Bishops who are supportive and to win over others because their awareness and understanding of gender injustices is critical and their influence is needed to take forward meaningful work on gender equality.

Humanitarian programmes: Addressing gender is seen as being difficult in emergencies by staff members, who are often overwhelmed and see gender as extra work. There is awareness of gender issues, for example to take into account women/girls' safety, but it is piecemeal. Data disaggregation is not always systematic and partners often do not have the necessary skills to carry out gender sensitive assessments.

6. Gender Mainstreaming with Partners

Progress on gender mainstreaming has not been universal across partner organisations and there have been cases of resistance to address gender inequality, in particular among church partners, and power imbalances persist in many communities. It will take time to change attitudes and social norms in order to see positive results. This will require CAFOD's commitment to adequately resource a long term process of change. Raising gender awareness therefore continues to be a priority and also building up technical capacity of partners to support the integration of a gender perspective into projects at their own pace.

Conclusions

It is clear from this review that the investment that CAFOD has made in the central provision of technical gender assistance has led to significant advances. Important changes have taken place and notable progress made in gender mainstreaming, however, much remains to be done to sustain and build on these achievements. The long term aim of gender mainstreaming is that gender is completely integrated within an organisation, everyone is gender aware, has taken ownership, has the tools and knowledge to integrate a gender focus in their own areas of work, and there are accountability mechanisms in place to monitor gender mainstreaming. But CAFOD has not reached this stage yet. The key areas where gender mainstreaming needs to be strengthened are identified in the recommendations of this report.

7. Recommendations

In order for CAFOD to progress to Stage 4 of the Theory of Change and have a positive enabling environment for promoting gender equality and a more widespread and substantial performance on gender mainstreaming, the key areas to be strengthened are identified in the following recommendations.

1. Drivers of change

- 1.1 To build on and maintain the achievements of the past 5 years continued central provision of technical gender assistance to programmes, partners and staff is required to sustain a positive operating environment for gender equality initiatives across CAFOD.
- 1.2 Gender training needs to take into account the complexities of Church teachings and values when working with faith based partners.
- 1.3 There needs to be staff with specific responsibility, authority and expertise to push the agenda forward and for gender issues to stay on the agenda.

Corporate commitment

- 1.4 Leadership from senior management on gender should continue by publicly supporting, championing and communicating the organisation's commitment to gender equality and providing adequate financial and human resources to implement the corporate gender policy and procedures, including global roll out in relevant languages.
- 1.5 The timeline of the corporate gender policy should be aligned to the corporate strategic framework and define short, medium and long term goals and indicators.
- 1.5 Formation of a Gender Monitoring Group of representatives from across the organisation, including senior management, to review annual divisional reports.
- 1.6 Gender questions should form part of staff performance appraisal systems.

2. Capacity and External Influencing

- 2.1 Management support for staff members to ensure that gender mainstreaming is being monitored in programmes and during staff appraisals is essential. Managers should be supported through in-depth gender training as required.
- 2.2 To increase capacity on gender across the organisation more dedicated staff time is necessary. To ensure there is a common understanding of gender further training for the COP is necessary and an agreed framework for work on gender mainstreaming should be applied across programmes.
- 2.3 To be better equipped to address the challenges the faith-gender nexus poses, increased focus on work with diocesan teams is needed to raise awareness of gender and CAFOD's approach with staff and supporters in England and Wales.

3. Corporate gender mainstreaming

Advocacy and Communications

- 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.
- 3.2 Increase participation in external faith based networks as well as maintaining an overview and participation in the international gender debate in order to feedback lessons and trends to CAFOD headquarters and all regions.
- 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.
- 3.4 Increased visibility of gender work in website.

Organisational culture

3.5 It is important for HR to communicate progress in implementation of the Action Plan from the leadership report and the other employment related issues arising in this review.

4. Programmes

- 4.1 Ensure appropriate incentives and accountability mechanisms are put in place. Each division should identify indicators in their divisional/departmental/team work plans to monitor the implementation of the gender strategy.
- 4.2 Minimum standards for all programmes should include: sex disaggregated data, gender analysis and efforts to address strategic gender needs.
- 4.3 Monitoring and Evaluation systems should measure impact and benefits for women's participation and empowerment; equitable access to and control over resources and decision making; changes in power relations and discriminating gender attitudes.
- 4.4 Mechanisms should be put in place to assess staff attitudes to gender and ability to manage programmes and staff in a gender sensitive manner and to promote gender responsive programming.
- 4.5 Technical support should be provided to address the gender capacity needs identified in revised programmes and in C/RSPs, and in countries where 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.
- 4.7 Increased support for humanitarian programmes through tailored gender training and accompaniment during an emergency.

5. Partners

- 5.1 Selection criteria for new partners should include a commitment to gender equality.
- 5.2 Gender questions should form part of partner monitoring visits.
- 5.3 More resources for south-south partner gender learning particularly in the context of faith based perspective building on good learning and sharing from the 'promoting gender equality with the churches' programme.