



**Accountable
Now**

GLOBAL STANDARDS LOCAL TRUST



ADRA – Adventist Development and Relief Agency Independent Review Panel Feedback

**Accountability Report 2016–2017
Review Round October 2018**



Adventist Development and Relief Agency Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round October 2018

16 November 2018

Dear Jonathan Duffy,

Thank you for submitting your accountability report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your efforts to continuously strengthen accountability to communities, local partners, supporters, staff, donors, or other key constituencies. Our key focus is on accountability to those you serve. It is against this background that we critically discussed your report and came to the individual assessment below.

ADRA's first accountability report provides an overview of key organisational and strategic structures and processes. The opening statement from President Jonathan Duffy highlights progress made on accountability as well as next steps for improvement. He sees ADRA's journey towards greater accountability as an opportunity to learn and make progress, which the Panel appreciates.

As this first report did not follow Accountable Now's reporting questions, several sections were not covered. The Panel has therefore not put together an improvement analysis highlighting key areas for improvement, and encourages ADRA to work through the reporting questions when preparing its next report, with reference to the guidance the Panel has provided. ADRA can consult the Accountable Now secretariat at any time if it would like further support.

The Panel encourages ADRA to make key documents publicly available, including its strategy document, complaints policy, and any other relevant policies the organisation has in place. The Panel believes that ADRA's own members as well as other CSOs would find the documents give useful pointers for their own approaches. It would also suggest including a section on accountability on the website, making reference to Accountable Now membership, the 12 Accountability Commitments, and ADRA's own accountability reports.

Overall, the Panel approves of ADRA's first accountability report to Accountable Now, and the organisation is moved from Affiliate to **Full Membership** with immediate effect.

Our intention is that this feedback letter, and any response you may wish to provide, is made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report – as it is the case with all previously reviewed reports. However, should there be errors of fact in the feedback above or in the note below; we would of course wish to correct these before publication. Please share any comments or



amendments by 14 December 2018. If you have any other feedback or comments on our work, please share them with us by sending them to the Accountable Now Secretariat.

Yours sincerely,

Mihir Bhatt

Jane Kiragu

Dabie Songco



ADRA's Accountability Report 2016-2017

Review Round October 2018

Opening Statement from the Head of Organisation

Jonathan Duffy, President of ADRA International, opens the organisation's first accountability report with an overview of key achievements relating to accountability in 2016-2017. These include a new strategic framework, joining Accountable Now, creating new systems for accountability monitoring across the ADRA global network, and a new complaints mechanism.

He also identifies areas for improvement, such as improving consistency of approach to monitoring and accountability across ADRA's country offices, and outlines how ADRA is responding.

ADRA's journey towards greater accountability is seen as an opportunity to identify deficiencies in the organisation and make progress – Accountable Now and the Independent Review Panel look forward to working together with ADRA on this journey.

Cluster A: Impact Achieved

A. The impact we achieve

1	<p>Mission statement and theory of change</p> <p>The report outlines ADRA's purpose and values, where accountability, transparency, and open communication feature. The organisation's vision and mission are also available on ADRA's website.</p>
2	<p>Key strategic indicators for success</p> <p>ADRA developed a new strategic framework in 2016, for the period 2017-2022. The framework features five change goals covering improved outcomes for ADRA's beneficiaries through programmes, increased capacity to deal with humanitarian emergencies, and transforming the organisation's governance, structure, and business model.</p> <p>The Panel would like to know whether there are measurable indicators or targets for these change goals against which ADRA can demonstrate progress. An example to refer to could be CARE International's set of 25 global outcome and change indicators. Are there ways of measuring the contribution of different regional/country offices to the goals, and will indicators be part of the criteria for the licensing and accreditation of ADRA's global network?</p>



3	<p>Progress and challenges over the reporting period</p> <p>ADRA's annual report (for 2016 – as of September 2018 the 2017 report was not yet online) provides a good insight into ADRA's impact through projects, with figures about the number and funding of projects, and a breakdown of beneficiaries by region, gender, and sector. Stories about the people ADRA has helped in various countries provide illustrative examples. Appendix III of the accountability report provides figures about ADRA's emergency responses and reach in 2016 and 2017.</p> <p>In terms of progress within the organisation, ADRA finalised a new strategic framework, worked on a new licensing and accreditation system for ADRA's global network (to be introduced in early 2019). The Panel sees this as a strong institutional commitment to accountability, beyond the usual reporting and compliance efforts, and as more details of the system's application and effectiveness emerge over the coming year(s), this is likely to be shared as a good practice with other members.</p> <p>ADRA also approved a complaints mechanism, and while its application has been rather ad hoc amongst ADRA offices, this is expected to change once the licensing and accreditation system is in place, as a complaints mechanism is a requirement for accreditation.</p> <p>Another challenge as identified in an audit by the Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative include the lack of a framework to ensure communities are not negatively affected by ADRA's work and are more resilient.</p> <p>It is stated that an action plan has been developed to address these areas of concern. The Panel looks forward to hearing about progress in the next report, along with a timeline for any further developments which are expected.</p> <p>In the next report, if ADRA is able to provide specific targets or indicators for success (as mentioned in A2 above) the Panel would also like to read about progress and challenges in relation to these.</p>
4	<p>Significant events or changes regarding governance and accountability</p> <p>As covered in more detail under A2 and A3, ADRA developed a new strategic framework in 2016 with five change goals, introduced a complaints mechanism policy, and worked on a licensing and accreditation (ALA) system.</p> <p>It is stated that a draft accountability framework was developed at the end of 2017 and is expected to be approved and applied by the ADRA network throughout 2018. How does the framework differ from the ALA and what does it</p>



	cover? The Panel would like more information on this in the next report, including a link to the framework.
B. Positive results are sustained	
1	<p><i>Sustainability of your work</i></p> <p>The report's section on "ADRA's approach" mentions that the organisation works through partnerships with governmental and nongovernmental partners to foster lasting change. The first change goal in ADRA's new strategic framework also refers to programmes for secure and sustainable livelihoods.</p> <p>In the next report, the Panel would like to see more information about how ADRA ensures the sustainability of their work, including some examples. This could include meaningfully involving stakeholders (beneficiaries) throughout the planning, implementation and monitoring of programmes so that they are able to take over and continue programmes after their official end. It might also include learning from programmes, identifying effective solutions, and applying these more broadly or scaling them up.</p>
2	<p><i>Lessons learned in the reporting period</i></p> <p>The gaps and areas for improvement identified in the reporting period (primarily through the CHS benchmarking audit) are covered under A3 above.</p> <p>In terms of lessons learned, the Panel would be interested in hearing about any particular takeaways from successes, failures, or feedback received, which will be applied to ADRA's future work. In particular, we would be interested in lessons "down the line", from country offices.</p> <p>While an ambitious approach, the Panel points to CARE's efforts around learning (see their report here, pg. 14) as possible ideas to explore. These include producing top learning reports which drive improvement and dialogue with stakeholders, a Learning and Needs Analysis report, and a learning pilot programme to support country offices in reflecting on their impact.</p>



C. We lead by example	
1	<p>Leadership on strategic priorities</p> <p>Here the Panel would like to hear how ADRA provides leadership or guidance to peers in the sector as well as stakeholders, for example through membership in or coordination of any working groups or initiatives, by providing training on certain issues, or sharing information, tools, and learnings broadly.</p> <p>Are the innovations and approaches identified through ADRA's Technical Learning Labs shared externally? If so, this could be an example.</p> <p>Can ADRA point to positive feedback from stakeholders or peers which indicates trust in and appreciation of ADRA's efforts?</p>
2	<p>Inclusivity, human rights, women's rights and gender equality</p> <p>How does ADRA work in an inclusive way, protect human rights and promote women's rights and gender equality? The Protection Policy mentioned in the report is one example (the Panel would appreciate more information on this and how it is implemented in the next report). Are there any other relevant policies such as a gender policy (see example from CARE) or an inclusion policy which covers diversity factors such as age, nationality, disability, etc.?</p>
3	<p>Minimising negative impacts on stakeholders</p> <p>ADRA has a Protection Policy which includes a complaints mechanism specific to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and the protection of children. The Panel requests a link to this policy in the next report.</p> <p>Are there other policies or practices guiding the minimisation of negative impacts on ADRA's stakeholders, such as a code of conduct, a process to assess and mitigate unintended impacts of projects, or efforts to support rather than compete with local organisations?</p> <p>If any such processes are in place, the Panel would like to know how these work in practice.</p> <p>As an example, CARE's advocacy handbook includes a section on risk management, outlining how they understand and mitigate unintended negative impacts on the people they work with, including partners.</p>
4	<p>Responsible stewardship for the environment</p> <p>In this section, the Panel would like to hear about any processes ADRA has to reduce negative environmental impacts, such as reducing carbon emissions, limiting air travel, using renewable energy in its offices, recycling, water saving</p>



and paper saving initiatives, etc. Is there an environmental policy and/or targets? If carbon emissions are measured, an overview of these should be provided.

The Panel would like to know how any existing initiatives work in practice and how they are implemented across the ADRA network. If there aren't any initiatives in place, is there a plan to introduce these?

Cluster B: Stakeholder Involvement

D. Key stakeholders are identified with great care

1	<p>Key stakeholders and how they are identified</p> <p>ADRA's key stakeholders are people in poverty and distress as well as community-based and grassroots organisations. In the next report the Panel requests specific reference to stakeholders (are there others besides those the Panel has mentioned?) and information about how ADRA identifies and prioritises them. Is there, for example, a particular focus on a specific region or those of a certain age or belonging to a minority?</p>
2	<p>Reaching out to those impacted or concerned by your work</p> <p>How does ADRA engage the people it works with? How is contact made initially, what methods of engagement are used (e.g. questionnaires, community consultations) and how is participation ensured where it is needed? How does this work in the humanitarian emergency context, where there is an overlap between disasters, safeguarding issues, etc? Are there challenges in engaging certain groups (e.g. certain minorities or local organisations or a variety of subsections of communities) and if so how does ADRA overcome these?</p>
3	<p>Maximising coordination with others operating in the same space</p> <p>The report states that ADRA pursues "strong, equitable relationships with community-based and grassroots organisations" – this is identified as key to ensuring ADRA's work impacts those who need it most and to foster lasting change.</p> <p>In the next report the Panel would like to see more information about how ADRA works in partnerships. How are partners identified? Do they need to adhere to certain values or policies? How does ADRA ensure it doesn't duplicate or undermine local efforts, but rather work to maximise capacities and impact? Is there a partnership policy or similar guiding this?</p> <p>A good practice example is from CARE Caucasus (report here, pg. 23), which creates partnership contracts not as sub-contracts for services, but as mutual</p>



	<p>commitments that specify how partners can hold each other accountable. They collect and report on feedback from partners and discuss it together to see how to improve.</p> <p>Restless Development (report here, pg. 22) is another good example. They are committed to capacity building for partners at various levels, and support increased Southern CSO engagement in advocacy and influencing. Partnerships are based on common visions and goals, increasing impact, and comparative advantage. There is a focus on working through existing structures, which leads to sustainable outcomes.</p>
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E. We listen to, involve and empower stakeholders

<p>1</p>	<p>Stakeholder feedback</p> <p>The report states that there are multiple ways in which ADRA communicates and reports to key stakeholders. An overview of communication with donors and the general public is provided: ADRA's Boards at all levels are provided with progress reports which include successes and challenges, and funders also receive reports on programmes they support. Insights into impact at the community level are communicated online, through social media as well as through publications and press releases. The Panel would like to know what these stakeholders say in response to the information ADRA shares. Is feedback actively sought from them, and if so how?</p> <p>Regarding beneficiaries, it is stated that open communication and feedback mechanisms are expected to be available, but there is no system to measure and report on the effectiveness of this. It is mentioned that ADRA is currently working to close this gap – the Panel would like to know what steps are being taken and what the timeline for this is.</p> <p>Overall, the Panel would be looking for a description of how feedback is sought, e.g. through satisfaction surveys, consultation processes, community visits, as well as any evidence of stakeholders being satisfied with these and with ADRA's response. An example is from Terre des Hommes' report, pg. 14 (particularly the case study from TDH Germany).</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Stakeholder engagement</p> <p>Here we would like to see how ADRA engages its stakeholders in various aspects of its work, such as programme planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, decision-making etc. Are there policies or processes guiding this? Are there examples of how stakeholder input has impacted decisions and shaped organisational programmes or policies?</p>



	<p>Were stakeholders on the ground (beneficiaries) consulted during the development of ADRA's new strategic framework?</p> <p>For examples of good practice, ADRA could refer to how Terre des Hommes reframed its campaign on “children on the move” after stakeholder consultation and engages youth in decision-making processes on its Destination Unknown campaign (report here, page 15). Another example is how Restless Development engages youth and encourages them to lead the organisation's work – see their youth leadership model here, page 9.</p>
3	<p>Main likes/dislikes from stakeholders and organisation's response</p> <p>Here the Panel would like to see a summary of key feedback from stakeholders as well as information about how ADRA is responding to this feedback. See how CBM presents this information in their report, pg. 26.</p>
4	<p>People and partners have gained capacities that last beyond your immediate intervention</p> <p>Under this question (if not covered already under B1 above) the Panel would like to hear about processes/initiatives ADRA has to ensure its work is sustainable and that people and partners continue to benefit from ADRA's efforts after the official end of projects and interventions. In addition, the Panel would wish to know what sustainability interventions are made to promote agency of individuals, and enhance capacities, self-esteem and empowerment.</p>
<p>F. Our advocacy work addresses the root cause of problems</p>	
1	<p>Evidence regarding the root causes of the problems you address</p> <p>How does ADRA gather evidence regarding the root causes of the problems it addresses in its advocacy work? Good practice here would include contextual analysis and ongoing research to identify and stay abreast of advocacy issues, and the active engagement of stakeholders (particularly affected populations) in formulating advocacy approaches.</p> <p>The CARE International Advocacy Handbook is a good reference point which includes illustrative examples.</p>
2	<p>Stakeholders support your advocacy work and value changes achieved</p> <p>Here we would be looking for how ADRA involves key stakeholders/beneficiaries throughout the advocacy planning, implementation and evaluation process, or evidence (such as positive feedback) that stakeholders value the successes ADRA achieves.</p>



	A good example is CIVICUS' approach – see p. 20-21 of their report .
G. We are transparent, invite dialogue and protect stakeholders' safety	
1	<p>Availability of key policies and information on your website</p> <p>The report covers ADRA's internal information management system – an online virtual collaboration platform for the storage and tracking of information, policies, and data, as well as for communication across and between ADRA offices.</p> <p>Key policies and documents do not appear to be available on the ADRA website – the Panel could only find the annual report and financial statements, protection policy, and privacy policy.</p> <p>Information on ADRA's programmes and impact are available on the website and in the annual report. However, the Panel encourages ADRA to make further documents publicly available, including its strategy document, complaints policy, and any other relevant policies the organisation has in place. The Panel believes that ADRA's own members as well as other CSOs would find the documents give useful pointers for their own approaches.</p> <p>The Panel highlights as an exemplary practice Restless Development's provision of links to almost all relevant information and policies, including governance, programmes, finances and performance, in one place on their website (see their page on Open Information Policy, with information and policies linked in the Appendix at the bottom of the page).</p>
2	<p>Pay scale, gender pay gap and top salaries</p> <p>The Panel would like to know about ADRA's pay scales and any information about the gender pay gap, as well as an overview of the salaries of the top 5 positions in the organisation, and the ratio of highest to lowest salary.</p> <p>Some examples of good practice include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sightsavers: publication of a gender pay gap report on their website ● Restless Development: publication of their global salary scale online ● Plan: publication of the remuneration of individuals holding key international management positions (here, page 11) ● Article 19: comprehensive description of an internal review of salaries (here, page 12)
3	<p>Ensuring privacy rights and protecting personal data</p> <p>Whilst not specified in the report, ADRA does have a privacy policy which explains the information it collects from visitors to the website, how information</p>



	is kept secure, and how it deals with information about donors and children. The policy could also include guidance on how people can check, amend, or remove their personal information from ADRA's systems.
4	<p>Largest donors and their contributions</p> <p>The report states that ADRA had 94,277 individual donors in 2016. According to ADRA's 2016 annual report, the US government was the largest donor, providing 42.7% of the organisation's annual income. In the next report, the Panel requests an overview of the five largest donors and the value of their contributions.</p>

Cluster C: Organisational Effectiveness

H. Staff and volunteers are enabled to do their best

1	<p>Recruitment, employment and staff development is fair and transparent</p> <p>In this section of the report, we would like to hear about ADRA's policies or processes guiding fair recruitment and employment, including equal opportunities for career development. For reference, Restless Development has a very comprehensive Equal Opportunity policy (Section 5 of their employee handbook).</p> <p>This is also where ADRA can provide statistics about the composition of its staff. The report states that ADRA employed 7,241 staff in 2016 and 28,916 volunteers engaged with ADRA's work. In the next report, can ADRA provide a breakdown of these figures by gender, age, nationality, disability (including numbers of local hires), as well as responsibility level (e.g. how many top management positions are held by women or by local hires)? See Sightsavers' report, pp. 22-24 as an example.</p> <p>Finally, how does ADRA ensure its hiring practices build local capacities and do not undermine the local NGO or public sectors? See how Restless Development talks about this in their report, pg. 33.</p>
2	<p>Staff development and safe working environment</p> <p>Here ADRA should refer to opportunities for staff development and training, how training needs are identified and to what extent staff actually undertake training/development. The Panel would also like to know about performance appraisals for staff.</p> <p>Regarding a safe working environment, are there any policies or guidelines covering this and staff behaviour, including bullying, harassment, discrimination,</p>



	<p>and health and safety? Relevant documents could include a staff code of conduct, anti-discrimination or anti-harassment policy, safeguarding policy, etc. Is there a dedicated channel for staff to submit concerns, such as a grievance mechanism or whistleblower hotline, and any mechanisms to protect staff who file grievances from retribution?</p> <p>Restless Development has some good policies – see their employee handbook's sections on equal opportunities (section 5) and dignity at work (section 6). Sightsavers is another good example, both in terms of processes enabling a safe working environment and staff development opportunities; see pp. 24-25 of their 2017 report.</p>
<p>I. Resources are handled effectively for the public good</p>	
<p>1</p>	<p>Resources are acquired in line with your values, globally accepted standards and without compromising independence</p> <p>In this section we would like to see information about any fundraising policies or processes ADRA has, including how to ensure the organisation's independence is not unduly compromised by major donors (such as the US government which provided 42.7% of ADRA's funds in 2016).</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Monitoring of progress and re-allocation of resources</p> <p>Under this question the Panel would like to know how ADRA tracks progress against its objectives (such as strategic objectives for the whole organisation or programme-specific targets) and how resources are re-allocated when necessary.</p> <p>See Sightsavers' approach (report here, pp. 26-27) as a helpful reference.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Minimising risk of corruption, bribery and misuse of funds</p> <p>Here we would be looking for any policies and processes addressing prevention, reporting, and investigation of incidents of fraud or corruption. Processes might include risk assessments, internal controls, independent auditing of finances, and training of staff so they are aware of policies and procedures. The Panel would also like to know what action would be taken if any incidences of fraud or corruption were to be identified, as well as information about any relevant situations that occurred during the reporting period.</p>



J. Governance processes maximise accountability

1	<p>Governance structure and recruitment of trustees/board members</p> <p>A detailed overview of ADRA's governance structure is provided. ADRA International's Board is the highest body, with regional and country offices following. Each office has a board which provides strategic guidance and legal and financial oversight, as well as an Administrative Committee managing day-to-day operational decisions.</p> <p>ADRA International's President and Vice President are ex-officio members of ADRA regional offices' boards, and regional office directors are ex-officio members of corresponding country regions' boards. The Secretary of the ADRA International board is the President of ADRA International.</p> <p>The ADRA International Board has 30 members from within the network as well as externals. How are trustees recruited? Are there targets relating to gender, age, geographical representation, expertise in different subject areas, etc.? More information about recruitment as well as terms of trustees is requested in the next report.</p> <p>The report also outlines the Network Committee (NETCOM) which determines network-wide policy and strategic direction, the advisory committees which report to the NETCOM, and the sector-specific Technical Learning Labs (TLLs) which identify and brand ADRA approaches, innovations, synergies, and complementarities. The TLLs develop technical manuals, guidelines, standard operating procedures, and other resources. Members of TLLs are specialists from within the ADRA network; are external experts or peers ever consulted to incorporate knowledge and learnings from the sector? To whom is the NETCOM accountable?</p>
2	<p>Board oversight of adherence to policies, resource allocation, potential risks, and complaints processes</p> <p>The Board provides legal and financial accountability, strategic vision, and oversight for risk management. In the next report, the Panel would like to see some more information about how this is done. Are policies and ADRA's adherence to these reviewed periodically? Are complaints (or an overview of complaints) presented to the Board for consideration? How is resource allocation tracked and revised when necessary? Does the Board have a Finance/Risk committee?</p>



3	<p>Complaints handling mechanisms and overview of complaints (internal and external)</p> <p>The report states that a network-wide policy, “Complaints and Response Mechanism,” was approved in early 2016. The Panel would have liked to see a link to this policy and a description of the mechanism, and requests this in the next report. The complaints policy does not appear to be on ADRA’s website and there does not seem to be a dedicated complaints channel (e.g. email or hotline). This is a key requirement of a functioning complaints mechanism, and the Panel encourages ADRA to make the relevant information publicly available in the coming year.</p> <p>Are there separate dedicated complaints mechanisms for ADRA staff, such as a grievance or whistleblowing mechanism, or is the complaints policy mentioned above also for staff use?</p> <p>The Panel would also like to know how ADRA makes the complaints mechanism known to internal and external stakeholders, and whether there is evidence that it is being used and working well in practice. An overview of complaints, their broad nature (e.g. relating to fundraising, programmes, communications, etc.) and whether they were resolved is also requested in future reports.</p> <p>Due to lack of resource allocation the policy has not been rolled out across the whole ADRA network, and application of the policy has been ad hoc. It is stated that this will change with the rollout of the licensing and accreditation requirements in early 2019, as a complaints mechanism will be a key requirement for ADRA offices.</p> <p>The report states that due to donor requirements, ADRA International’s project proposal templates require inclusion of a complaints mechanism in the design of projects, as well as reporting on complaints.</p> <p>ADRA also has a protection policy which includes a complaints mechanism specific to gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and protection of children. More information about this is requested in the next report, including a link to the policy (the Panel encourages this be made available online as well).</p>
<p>K. Leadership is dedicated to fulfilling the 12 Commitments</p>	
1	<p>The governing body and management are held accountable for fulfilling strategic promises</p> <p>Under this question, ADRA could share how its Board’s and management-level staff’s performance is assessed, particularly on strategic aims and goals. Does</p>



	<p>the Board and the CEO undergo annual performance reviews? Given the President of ADRA International is also a member of the Board, how does ADRA ensure a fair review of the President's performance?</p>
<p>2</p>	<p><i>Inclusion of staff in discussing progress toward organisational accountability</i></p> <p>In this section, the Panel would like to see information about how staff are involved in decision-making – are there discussions about ADRA's accountability, successes, and challenges?</p> <p>How are staff involved in the Accountable Now reporting process, and does this foster discussions about accountability? For example, the Panel's feedback and identified areas for improvement might be discussed with staff.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p><i>Scope of this accountability report and influence over national entities</i></p> <p>The report is submitted by ADRA International on behalf of the ADRA Network (all ADRA offices worldwide, working in 131 countries in 2016). ADRA International determines and monitors the formal structure of the Network, and through the new licensing and accreditation system will monitor compliance with minimum standards relating to mission, governance, organisational structure, financial management, programmes, partnerships, identity, and risk management.</p> <p>The Panel commends ADRA on this initiative, and in future reports looks forward to seeing some examples from ADRA's work on the ground to illustrate how various policies and practices are implemented. It would also be interesting to know how national entities shape ADRA's overall work.</p>