

Accountable Now

GLOBAL STANDARDS LOCAL TRUST



CARE International Independent Review Panel Feedback

**Accountability Report 2015-2016
Review Round July 2017**



CARE International

Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round July 2017

07 September 2017

Dear Wolfgang Jamann,

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. Before we share this with you, however, we want to highlight a few issues of concern that we found throughout most of the nine reports assessed in the last review round.

Closing the feedback loop with stakeholders (NGO2, NGO9)

A [recent study](#) on 40 international civil society organisations' (CSOs') accountability practices - conducted by the *direct impact group* on behalf of Accountable Now - revealed that only three out of these 40 CSOs responded with an appropriate answer to a complaint test within three weeks.

This is alarming. All Members of Accountable Now should have a fully functioning feedback mechanisms in place. However, when checking your reports we found a consistent lack of reporting filed complaints per type, quantity, and region as well as a total lack of information on how they were resolved. We believe this is not an acceptable level of accountability. CSOs should not only have a mechanism in place but should first be capturing complaints with the appropriate level of detail and then monitoring their resolution and agreeing what actions need to be taken to ensure the same issues do not arise.

[Feedback Labs](#), with whom Accountable Now collaborated on the [People-Powered Accountability project](#), also serve as a valuable source of information on how to close feedback loops.

Collaboration with partners, communities and networks (NGO6, EC7 & SO1)

As part of the [12 Accountability Commitments](#), Accountable Now Members commit to working in genuine partnership with local communities and partners. With increased globalisation of information, more empowered citizens engage and civic space is challenged, it becomes ever more important to help local communities and partners to thrive. However, we found that coordination with local communities is still an overall weakness area among the Accountability Reports we received. Some



“common” ICSO practices can have intended or unintended consequences on local communities. We would thus like to particularly highlight a lack of contributions to building local capacity and resources. Do you take into account local market conditions and think about working alongside local organisations building their capacity? We suggest that ICSOs should start to consider their impact on the sustainability and independence of local civil society in all their work (such as planning, budgeting, economic impact, etc.).

Adding to what people do to improve their lives

(NGO3)

To state the obvious, impact measurement is important. However, many evaluations mentioned in received Accountability Reports focus on collecting relatively large amounts of data on people reached, however, this does not tell us much about the improvement in their lives. Moreover, we should critically ask ourselves: What is the ICSO’s credit in this improvement and what positive impact is actually due to the people and beneficiaries themselves?

While we are of course aware that resources are limited, there is clearly no substitute for a robust and honest impact evaluation of our programmes and activities.

Organisation-specific feedback to CARE International:

CARE International’s first interim report demonstrates continued strong **institutional commitment** to accountability. The Secretary General’s statement notes a number of positive developments over the reporting period, most notably the adoption of an organisation-wide Accountability Framework, and concrete steps for its implementation. The Panel is interested to learn about the results of introducing the framework in the next report.

The open and self-reflective identification of areas for improvement in the opening statement, along with steps to improve, is noted positively by the Panel as **good practice**.

Overall, CARE has taken the Panel’s previous feedback on board, provided more details in a number of the profile disclosures as requested, and has incorporated some of the Panel’s feedback into updated policies and processes. The report is clear and concise. The Panel looks forward to CARE’s continued progress on these points, particularly the provision of links to policies and documents, and evidence of policies working well in practice, in the next report.

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 22 September 2017.

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

Rhonda Chapman

John Clark

Louise James

Jane Kiragu

Nora Lester Murad

Saroeun Soeung



Cover Note on CARE International's Accountability Report 2015-2016

Review Round July 2017

PROFILE DISCLOSURES

I. Strategy and Analysis

1.1	<p>Statement from the most senior decision-maker</p> <p><i>Fully addressed</i></p> <p>The opening statement from Secretary General Wolfgang Jamann demonstrates strong institutional commitment to accountability. The adoption of an organisation-wide Accountability Framework in 2016 is noted positively by the Panel – particularly the parallels to the Global Standard commitments, and the use of good practices and learnings during the development of the framework. There are also concrete steps outlined relating to the implementation of the framework in practice. The panel looks forward to seeing the results of the framework being implemented.</p> <p>The Panel commends CARE's initiative to consolidate the information they collect, and analyse it against the new framework. The involvement of senior leadership and governance in discussing achievements, gaps and opportunities in this regard is also noted positively.</p> <p>CARE's efforts in measuring global set of impact data on the reach of CARE's programming, against their impact goals for 2020, is a further achievement. The Panel looks forward to seeing more information in the CI-wide impact report which will be available later in 2017.</p> <p>Finally, the Panel appreciates the frank and self-reflective inclusion of areas for improvement, as identified by CARE's leadership, in the Secretary General's statement. Again, there are steps to improve on these gaps, and the Panel looks forward to updates on progress in CARE's next report.</p>
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PROFILE DISCLOSURES

2. Organisational Profile

2.8	<p>Scale of the reporting organisation</p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel is pleased to see that CARE has consolidated data on the whole confederation for the first time, in this reporting period. As a small matter of clarification, the Panel would like to know what currency the revenue is reported in. Beyond the information referred to in the included snapshot, will the number of supporters, volunteers and interns also be included, as the Panel suggested last year?</p>
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4. Governance Structure and Key Stakeholders

4.5	<p>Compensation for members of highest governance body</p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>CARE acknowledges that this point has not yet been consistently addressed. However, it is unclear whether it will be in the future – the report states that it is difficult to publish executive salaries in one consolidated place, due to differing national legal environments. The Panel would clarify that the executive salaries of all national offices are not required, and that an option could be to focus on the top offices in the organisation, or provide a description of how salaries are set.</p> <p>Some examples of how other Accountable Now Members address this question in their reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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)
4.6	<p>Conflicts of interest</p> <p><i>Addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel is pleased to hear that CARE's CI Code is being updated, including the section on how conflicts of interest are managed. The report states that CARE's new two-tier governance system is designed to ensure checks and balances, and address conflicts of interest, by de-linking management from governance. The Panel looks forward to seeing the finalised updated CI Code, and to further information about how the CI Secretariat addresses conflicts, in the next report.</p>



4.10	<p>Process to support highest governance body's own performance</p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>A number of reforms to CARE's governance in the reporting period will affect how governance performance is supported and evaluated. The Panel looks forward to more information about this, and how it leads to increased effectiveness.</p> <p>The development of a new performance assessment process is noted positively by the Panel. It would be interesting to know the completion rate of this process, as well as follow-ups and outcomes. The Panel also repeats its request to see the results of these assessments.</p> <p>The Panel is pleased to read that external feedback will be sought bi-annually from CI council members, key staff, and other stakeholders, and welcomes further information on this after the process is introduced in FY18.</p>
4.15	<p>Basis for identification of stakeholders</p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel appreciates the description of how CARE's country presences assess their contribution to impact, including stakeholder analysis and partnership mapping. The documents or policies used in making these assessments, or the provision of more details around criteria, would be welcomed in the next report.</p>

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

III. Environmental Management

EN16 & 26	<p>Greenhouse gas emissions of operations and initiatives to mitigate environmental impact of activities and services</p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>The Panel welcomes CARE's decision to assess its alignment and performance against its commitments to become a Climate Smart organisation. Assessments by each CARE International Member on key environmental areas are noted positively, and the Panel would be interested in the results of these assessments and in particular to understand particular areas of strength and weakness. The Panel would also welcome a link to the good practices from across the CARE confederation in this regard, particularly information about how Members and Country Offices mitigate their environmental impact.</p>
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	<p>A flight travel policy and guidance for Care International s being implemented in national contexts, and the Panel looks forward to more details – including a link to the policy and Members' adherence to is – in the next report.</p> <p>Finally, the Panel requests updated data on CARE's greenhouse gas emissions.</p>
SO3 & SO4	<p><i>Anti-corruption practices and corrective actions</i></p> <p><i>Partially addressed</i></p> <p>CARE has introduced a global policy governance committee and a global Policy Advisor position in the reporting period, and policies on child protection, fraud and anti-corruption, and complaints have been defined for consistent implementation across the confederation. The Panel would appreciate links to these new policies, as well as more information on their use and effectiveness.</p> <p>The report lists the 14 complaints the CARE Secretariat's central complaints system received in FY16. The panel welcomes the breakdown showing the functional areas and the geographic split. The Panel would welcome information about whether these incidents were resolved satisfactorily.</p>