



**Accountable
Now**

GLOBAL STANDARDS LOCAL TRUST



CBM – Christian Blind Mission
Independent Review Panel Feedback
Accountability Report 2018
Review Round September 2019



CBM – Christian Blind Mission

Feedback from the Independent Review Panel

Review Round September 2019

07 October 2019

Dear Kirsty Smith,

Thank you for submitting your accountability report. We, the Independent Review Panel of Accountable Now, appreciate your efforts to 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.

CBM's tenth accountability report is an interim report which responds to the Panel's feedback letter on its last full-length report. The Panel had not identified any major areas of weakness, and had only requested some more information on the availability of key policies and other information on CBM's website, and about staff development. Progress is evident on both areas, with further updates expected in the next full report.

The report also provides updates on key changes to occur in CBM during 2018. As CBM has been working on reviewing the implementation of its new strategy, there are many developments which are covered. These include reviewing and making some changes to the organisation's structure, the revision or introduction of several policies, and initiatives to foster better communication, learning and collaboration both within CBM as well as with partners.

The Panel appreciates the table at the end of the report, indicating where information on certain reporting questions (beyond the two areas flagged in the Panel's last improvement analysis) can be found in this interim report.

Overall this is a fairly comprehensive interim report which sheds light on many accountability-related developments, which the Panel is pleased to read about. We look forward to hearing about further progress in the next full report.

We look forward to discussing our feedback with you in a follow-up call, which the Secretariat will be in touch to schedule. This conversation will form the basis for your response letter, which will be made publicly available on the Accountable Now website along with your report and this feedback letter.

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,

Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel



CBM's Accountability Report 2018

Review Round September 2019

Opening Statement from the Head of Organisation

The opening statement from CBM's new Chairperson, Kirsty Smith, states that 2018 has been a year of evolution for the organisation, and highlights key developments relating to governance, strategy, and accountability. Learning, flexibility and adaptability are flagged as being key to the implementation of CBM's strategy.

A number of processes and standards were revised in 2018, including development of a new Programme Quality Framework and Partnership Principles. CBM's 3-Way Collaboration Approach was developed, ensuring various stakeholders share in decision-making and accountability for programmes. Key policies such as the Code of Conduct were reviewed, leading to a clearer understanding of the standards staff and partners are expected to meet. A new intranet and external website are also leading to better information sharing and communication across the CBM Federation.

Overall, the opening statement reflects significant change and learning, and an overall strengthening of accountability within the organisation. In the next report, the IRP would like the statement to also highlight any key challenges faced, and how CBM is working to address them.

Significant organisational developments

The report's section on Leadership and Accountability outlines key aspects of the implementation of CBM's new Federation strategy. As implementation began, it became clear that programmatic priorities needed to be clarified and refined into strategic goals. This process was led by a task force with staff from across the Federation and was concluded in 2018. The new, updated "Federation Strategy 2023" was launched in 2019. Details are provided about the re-design of the organisation, including a review of the countries where CBM works and of the organisation's global functions, responsibilities and organisational structure.

Section 5 of the report details further relevant developments in CBM in the past year. These include a review of the organisation's vision, mission and values to ensure consistency across the Federation, finalising a set of partnership principles, and developing five Initiatives (core areas of work with a technical focus). More information is provided on the new Programme Quality Framework, including its consultative development process.

A "three-way country collaboration" model was introduced, whereby country offices lead on programme work at country level, in collaboration with Initiatives and Members



Associations – the aim is to ensure CBM's work is relevant to each location's context and builds on existing experience in the country.

In 2018 CBM successfully carried out its first self-assessment in line with the Core Humanitarian Standard and expects to achieve full verification in 2021.

A Disability and Gender Analysis tool was developed to strengthen CBM's work towards disability and gender equality, and the Panel notes positively that it includes guidance on participatory methods for consulting stakeholders with disabilities. In 2018 CBM also launched its Disability Inclusive Development Initiative.

The report also refers to learning and exchange initiatives between country and regional leaders, provides more information on the launch of CBM's new global intranet, and developments relating to environmental sustainability.

Finally, two internal changes are highlighted – the departure from the Federation of CBM Canada, and the finalisation of a new Internal Audit Charter to strengthen the work of the Internal Audit Unit.

Cluster B: Stakeholder Involvement

G. We are transparent, invite dialogue and protect stakeholders' safety

G1	<p>Availability of key policies and information on your website</p> <p>CBM launched its updated website in March 2019. An accountability page includes links to the new Feedback and Complaints Handling Position Paper, the organisation's strategy, Code of Conduct, Partnership Principles, Programme Quality Framework, and Accountable Now and CHS accountability reports.</p> <p>Other policies available online include the Policy on Accessibility, Safety and Security Policy, and Safeguarding Policy for Children and Adults at Risk. These can be found by searching CBM's publications and filtering the document type by "policy". The Panel encourages CBM to also upload its Policy on Preventing Corruption and Fraud onto the website.</p> <p>Several of these policies are either new or have been updated, and the report explains the changes made to each policy. Most of the policies are available in several languages including English, French, German, and Spanish. A digital accessibility toolkit was also launched in 2018.</p> <p>The report states that the documents relating to evaluations, good practices, and lessons learned are available to staff on CBM's intranet, and that their publication on the website is being prepared. The Panel</p>	3
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	<p>appreciates this step, as well as the publication of more policies on the website already, in comparison to previous years. We look forward to following further progress on this in the next report.</p> <p>One area for further improvement is the website's presentation of information about submitting complaints. Users may not necessarily think to navigate to the Quality & Accountability page for information on this. It was also somewhat confusing because of the variety of information on different parts of the page – the “report an incident” section, followed by information on whistleblowing (but in a separate section so it was not necessarily clear if the previous mechanism was to be used), and finally information on feedback and complaints at the very bottom of the page, which users may not scroll far enough to reach.</p>	
<h2>Cluster C: Organisational Effectiveness</h2>		
<h3>H. Staff and volunteers are enabled to do their best</h3>		
<p>H2</p>	<p>Staff development and safe working environment</p> <p>In its feedback on CBM's last report, the Panel had identified CBM's approach to staff security as a good practice, but had requested more information on the Code of Conduct, and staff development. While information was provided on staff performance and conduct related issues, the IRP felt that the specific question (relating to staff development) did not appear to be addressed.</p> <p>CBM's Code of Conduct is now available on the website, and includes guidance on what is expected of staff, what constitutes unacceptable behaviour, and how to report concerns. The report further states that an internal task force on People, Performance and Culture has developed five organisational behaviours that all staff should aspire to.</p> <p>The report explains that organisational Key Performance Indicators were further aligned with individual staff Key Performance Objectives in 2018, focusing on the organisational behaviours. The KPIs have a stronger results focus than in previous years, and the relevance and usefulness of the KPIs will be reviewed again in 2019. There are new formats for setting KPOs, and a revised performance appraisal process. The HR department has also revised development and training guidelines for staff. CBM will provide an update on their implementation in the next full report.</p>	<p>3</p>