



## **STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA STUDY OF ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE**

### **SUMMARY OF CHRISTIAN AID'S MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Overall response**

This review has been useful, and successful in capturing the breadth of Christian Aid's accountable governance work. However, where the review succeeded in breadth it was weaker in depth. In future studies we will narrow the research remit and pull in stronger external perspectives.

It is rewarding to see how our work on accountable governance has taken shape, the different approaches used by our programme teams and the impact some of this work is having. However, the conclusion that we have not made the best of our internal resources is disappointing.

Also disappointing is the fact that, while our profile on some country-specific advocacy is strong, collectively our profile on governance is low. As with other focus area studies, the process and outputs of the review are useful in further defining our work in this area. As a result, we have much greater clarity about what we are aiming to achieve, particularly at a programme level.

#### **Affirmations**

We particularly endorse those recommendations regarding the content of the accountable governance strategy and the way the strategy group works, both by itself and with other strategy groups.

The accountable governance strategy is responsible for supporting and monitoring projects both that are 'pure accountable governance' and that have an accountable governance component. This makes it more diffuse and harder to deliver than HIV work, and indeed some economic justice work, which by their nature are more self-contained.

The challenge is to develop greater clarity about the outcomes and impacts we are seeking in projects working on accountable governance, either in part or fully. The accountable governance strategy group will therefore encourage projects under other strategy areas to adopt accountable governance approaches. It will monitor the extent to which this happens.

Our systems will tell us if projects fall under one or more strategy areas. They do not tell us the balance towards other strategies. It will be important for the strategy leaders to work together to monitor projects with combined goals.

The review shows that our programme teams are strong at adapting their accountable governance work to the local context, but by ensuring the strategy group engages with the current thinking on the role of the state, this could be strengthened still more.

We further endorse the finding that we need to be more creative in how we deploy our existing resources across the organisation – particularly strengthening the links between our country-specific and issues-specific advocacy – to ensure our key influencing targets recognise us as an agency with expertise in this area. We are pleased that the focus on corruption has begun to put us more on the map in this regard, but recognise the need to strengthen and broaden

our policy outputs on governance.

We agree that stronger linkages need to be made between our tax campaign and accountable governance issues. For example, the tax campaign provides an opportunity to talk about the importance of progressive tax systems for accountable governance – we could exploit this more systematically.

### **Findings/conclusions we question**

The revised goals proposed by the consultant for our corporate strategy *Turning Hope into Action (THIA)* have helped us greatly to clarify and define our goals. However, we have not adopted them fully. Alternative proposed new goals are outlined in the Appendix below.

The report sets out a lot of requests for additional resources, be they increased person-power for advocacy or more funding for partner exchange. In an ideal world, we would explore some of these options, but the current climate does not favour this. Before considering further investment, we will make it a priority to maximise our existing resources in ways that help build our external profile.

### **Issues we are now addressing**

When the refreshed *THIA* goals are agreed by our Board of Trustees, the next priority will be to refresh the accountable governance strategy in light of the recommendations. In particular, we will start exploring existing practice and opportunities to increase support to women's groups and political representation.

A priority will be to improve ways of working between the strategy groups. This includes facilitating greater opportunities for reflection and co-planning between the thematic strategies, and looking at how the accountable governance strategy group can work with the campaigns and communications strategy on the recommendations of this study.

The advocacy and communications director and the international director will work together to consider how best we can strengthen our advocacy work in this area, both within the forthcoming restructure of the policy, advocacy and campaigns divisions and teams, and in ways of working between the two departments.

### **Appendix**

Proposed new accountable governance goals:

#### **Goal 3.1**

To enable poor women and men, and civil society organisations, to influence and hold their governments to account.

#### **Goal 3.2**

To support initiatives seeking to transform conflict and reduce corruption and extreme discrimination where they have taken hold.

#### **Goal 3.3**

To persuade northern governments and international institutions to prioritise accountable, inclusive governance and conflict-resolution.

Please note these still need some strengthening but provide us with an idea of the different emphasis of each goal.