CDA's Expertise in Accountability and Feedback Loops

CDA COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECTS

CDA Collaborative Learning Projects (CDA, cdacollaborative.org) is a non-profit organization committed to improving the effectiveness of those who work to provide humanitarian assistance, engage in peace practice, support sustainable development, and conduct corporate operations in a socially responsible manner. Through our collaborative learning process, we combine rigorous analysis with pragmatic field-level work and deliver practical tools to field staff and policymakers alike, based on the findings from the collaborative learning processes. CDA is based in Cambridge, MA, United States, and has an office in Myanmar, which was established to support local application of conflict-sensitivity practices of national and international actors. CDA's activities are structured around two pillars: Collaborative Learning (including applied research) and Advisory Services (including coaching, mentoring, and longer-term accompaniment), tailored to our diverse range of partner and clients. CDA neither implements country-level projects, nor directly engages in advocacy. Our partners and clients value our independence and experience as a convener and facilitator of multi-stakeholder engagements.

CROSS-SECTORAL LEARNING IN ACCOUNTBILITY AND FEEDBACK LOOPS

CDA helps policy makers, practitioners, and organizations improve the quality, effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programs through better tools for joint analysis, participatory program design, feedback loops, listening and accountability mechanisms. CDA's work on aid effectiveness, accountability and feedback loops began in 2005 with the launch of the Listening Project. The Listening Project facilitated 20 listening exercises around the world, listening to 6,000+ people on the receiving end of international aid between 2005-2009. CDA's listening methodology featured open-ended conversations with people in recipient communities about their experiences with and analysis of the cumulative impacts of international aid efforts in their communities. This unique collaborative listening and learning effort engaged 130 international and local aid agencies and over 400 staff and volunteers, culminating in the publication of the book Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid (2012).

Lessons from the Listening Project and our Humanitarian Effectiveness research were integrated into policy discussions at several key aid effectiveness processes:
- Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Busan, November 2011)
- UN OCHA Policy Forums (2014, 2015)
- World Humanitarian Summit (Istanbul, May 2016)

CDA continues applied research on effective feedback loops with a keen interest in feedback utilization in program adaptation. Our newest collaborative learning project focuses on successful and responsible INGO exits in support of locally-led development and peacebuilding. A core commitment in this research is to engage local civil society organizations, researchers and evaluators in the Global South to help us examine what a responsible and successful exit looks like to different stakeholders. CDA is a member of InterAction, ALNAP, Feedback Labs, American Evaluation Association, European Evaluation Society, Alliance for Peacebuilding and Bond Beneficiary Feedback Learning Group.

SELECTION OF RECENT COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND APPLIED RESEARCH ENGAGEMENTS

Learning Partners	Collaborators	Substance	Region	Period
Search for Common Ground	Peacebuilding Evaluation Consortium	A case study on peacebuilding feedback loops in Burundi.	Burundi	2017
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	State Department	Developed and led an action research component for IRC's research into feedback utilization.	Uganda	2016-2017
BOND	BOND Members; DFID	Co-chaired DFID Program Partnership Learning Group (later Bond) on Beneficiary Feedback; facilitated learning; produced lessons summaries.	UK, Global	2015-2016
World Vision UK	DFID Inclusive Societies Department	Documented promising practices in accountability and feedback loops in World Vision's programs.	Ethiopia, Pakistan, and Nepal	2015-2016
Catholic Relief Services	Feedback Labs	Research and development on improving feedback utilization in cacao farming project.	Haiti	2015-2016
World Vision UK	DFID	Served on the Steering Group for DFID-funded Beneficiary Feedback Mechanism Pilots, implemented by World Vision UK in 6 countries.	Global	2015-2016
Disaster Ready	ALNAP	Co-developed an e-learning course on effective feedback in humanitarian contexts.	Global	2015
Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) Alliance		Wrote a chapter for 2015 Humanitarian Accountability Report. Provided input into the CHS Standard.	Global	2015
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)		Desk research and field visits on humanitarian effectiveness. Contributed to OCHA's final report presented at the World Humanitarian Summit.	Myanmar, Ethiopia, Haiti, the Philippines and Congo DRC	2014-2015
ITAD; Development Initiatives	DFID	A research and evaluation consortium to evaluate DFID-commissioned beneficiary feedback pilots.	Ethiopia, Tanzania, Pakistan, India, Somaliland,	2013-2014
ALNAP	German Ministry of Foreign Affairs; DFID	Conducted field research on effective feedback mechanisms. Produced guidance on designing and implementing humanitarian feedback mechanisms.	Sudan, Pakistan, Haiti, Global	2012-2014

SELECTION OF RECENT ADVISORY SERVICE ENGAGEMENTS

Clients / Partners	Substance	Region	Period
International Rescue Committee	Developed a client-responsiveness framework to guide program / project design, implementation and evaluation.	Global	2016
GOAL Ukraine	Provided training and technical assistance on conflict sensitivity and humanitarian feedback mechanisms.	Ukraine	2016
World Vision UK	Served as a learning partner for DFID-funded beneficiary feedback pilots in 6 countries. Facilitated learning events and contributed to practice notes.	Africa, UK	2015-2016
Norwegian Refugee Council	Developed agency-wide minimum standards and guidelines on establishing feedback and complaints mechanisms.	Global	2015
The World Humanitarian Summit	Produced a mapping of community engagement initiatives, a strategy and guidance to engage people in crisis-affected communities in the lead up to and at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.	Global	2015
Global Public Policy Institute	Peer reviewed research on monitoring and feedback in restricted contexts	Global	2015
ALNAP	Wrote the background paper and the final report for ALNAP 2014 annual meeting on engaging crisis-affected people in humanitarian response.	Global	2014
DFID	Responded to DFID Help Desk request on Beneficiary Feedback in Fragile and Conflict Affected States.	Global	2013
Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)	Provided input into the IASC Taskforce on Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Operational Framework.	Global	2012-Ongoing
Oxfam International	Facilitated a listening exercise in Tamil Nadu with former Oxfam partner and recipient communities; produced a report.	India	2012
The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	Desk research and report on feedback mechanisms in international assistance organizations.	Global	2011

SELECT KEY PUBLICATIONS

Anderson, Mary B., Dayna Brown, and Isabella Jean. *Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2012.

Bonino, Francesca, with Isabella Jean, and Paul Knox Clarke. *Closing the Loop: Effective Feedback in Humanitarian Contexts, Practitioner Guida*nce. London: ALNAP-CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2014.

Listening Project. *Feedback Mechanisms in International Assistance Organizations*. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2011.

Cechvala, Sarah, and Isabella Jean. "Accountability is a mirror that shows not only your face, but also your back." CDA-World Vision Ethiopia Feedback Loops Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, March 2016.

Cechvala, Sarah. "'Accountability starts with me.' Opening Inclusive Feedback Channels in Pakistan." CDA-World Vision Pakistan Feedback Loops Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, December 2015.

Cechvala, Sarah. "'For them, with them.' Building Accountability Systems in Post-Earthquake Nepal." CDA-World Vision International Nepal Feedback Loops Case Study. Cambridge, MA: CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, January 2016.

ALNAP. "Rhetoric or Reality? Putting Affected People at the Centre of Humanitarian Action." (2015)

OCHA. "Leaving No One Behind: Humanitarian Effectiveness in the Age of the Sustainable Development Goals." United Nations OCHA Policy and Studies Series (2016).

Jean, Isabella, with Francesca Bonino. "'We are committed to Listen to you': World Vision's Experience with Humanitarian Feedback Mechanisms in Darfur." London: ODI/ALNAP, 2013.

Jean, Isabella, with Francesca Bonino. "'Investing in listening': International Organization for Migration's Experience with Humanitarian Feedback Mechanisms in Sindh Province, Pakistan." London: ODI/ALNAP, 2014.

Jean, Isabella, with Francesca Bonino. "'We are Here': IFRC's Experiences with Communication and Feedback with Affected Populations in Haiti." London: ODI/ALNAP, 2014.

Bonino, Francesca, with Isabella Jean, and Paul Knox Clarke. "Humanitarian Feedback Mechanisms: Research, Evidence and Guidance." London: ALNAP/ODI, 2014.

Jean, Isabella, Tim Midgley, and Michelle Spearing. "CCVRI Help Desk Request and Response: Beneficiary Feedback in Fragile and Conflict Affected States (FCAS)," a product of the Conflict, Crime, and Violence Results Initiative (CCVRI). London: DFID, 2013.

OUR TEAM

The contact information for, and profiles of key staff with relevant expertise in CDA's Accountability and Feedback Mechanisms can be found at:
cdacollaborative.org/what-we-do/accountability-and-feedback-loops

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