CESAS Review and Accountability and Impact Measurement Training in Niger

November 11-24, 2012
Niamey, Niger

Lessons learned by
Amadou Idrissa
Watara Kassoum
Workshop Facilitators

Introduction

Niger is one of the six countries where ECB Consortium is established. The Niger ECB Consortium is composed of seven international organizations including Care, Catholic Relief Services, Mercy Corp, Oxfam, Plan, Save the Children and World Vision.

The Niger ECB project has requested to the ECB Standing Team a deployment on the following points as mentioned in the ToRs:

- Facilitate a review workshop of ECB Niger Consortium Self-Assessment Study (CSAS) findings in order to identify the gaps related to accountability systems and tools. The seven Niger ECB members is workshop have participated in this workshop.

- Train ECB Niger Consortium member organizations on Accountability and Impact Measurement focusing on the gaps identified during the CESAS review workshop.

- Assist organizations in establishing feed-back and complaints mechanisms in beneficiaries' communities'.

In addition to the seven ECB members, the ECB partners (local NGOs, National Early Warning System, National Food Security Crisis Unit, OCHA, and Red Cross/Red Croissant) have took part to the two last activities.

The logistic and administrative aspects have been managed by CARE International.

The deployment was held in Niamey (Niger) in November 11-24, 2012, by:

- Idrissa Amadou is OXFAM Regional Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager for Burkina Faso and Mauritania, based in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

- Kassoum Ouattara CRS Coastal & Sahel West Africa Regional Emergency Specialist also based in Ouagadougou.

Both are members of ECB Standing Team (ST) and both participated in Casablanca ECB Learning Workshop in November 2011.

This report hinges on the objectives described above following the standard format suggested to the team. In each section, information is presented per major activity (CSAS review workshop and AIM training including experiences exchanges on feed-back and complaints mechanisms).

A. Country Context

Niger is a vast and landlocked country of 1,267,000 km2, mostly covered by the Sahara Desert in the north and the semi-arid tropical Savannah known as the Sahel in the southern part of the country. The country is permanently exposed to recurrent humanitarian crises, the most frequent crises being food crisis due to drought and locust invasion and flooding.

The Niger current emergency situation is characterized by four major aspects:

Food crisis: The estimated number of affected people is 5.5 million. Food crises have severe effects on families and for the most part it is women and girls who take the hit. In certain regions, food crises increase the rate of divorces (e.g. in Maradi region, Niger, half of women divorce because of food insecurity); the head of family sees it as a way of having fewer mouths to feed. In other cases, food insecurity might contribute to early marriages; families give away their daughters (earlier) so they don't have to feed them. Husbands and young men leave to find work abroad, leaving mothers to lead the family on their own. In harvest time, some husbands lock up the grain storage and ask their wives to make do for several months. Food insecurity forces many families to take their children out of school and help at home or find work; they soon become parents; they have children who don't attend school either, and the cycle perpetuates.

Refugee's influx due to the conflict in North of Mali. Exacerbating the situation is fighting in northern Mali which has prompted massive population movement within Mali and from Mali to Niger. Right now, more than 440,000 people are displaced. Some have stayed within the

country borders, while many have fled to neighboring countries seeking refuge. Almost 70,000 Malians fled to neighboring Niger, putting more stress on the already vulnerable population.

Flood in Niger. The monsoon season and above-normal temperatures triggered heavy downpours and flash floods during this year's rainy season, displacing hundreds of thousands families more and devastating some farms already hit by a severe drought and acute food shortages. Rainfall was more than 150 percent above normal from late July to late August. As of September 12, 2012, the flood had displaced 527,471 people and killed 81 others. Most homeless families were located into school classrooms while some were living with their relatives.

Cholera outbreak: The advent of the rainy reason has increased the risk of waterborne diseases, including cholera. The situation is particularly worrying in Niger, where an epidemic in four districts along the Niger River has caused 71 deaths out of 3,423 cases reported since the beginning of the year. The region of Tillabéri, the most affected, has so far recorded 3,403 cases of cholera and 66 deaths. As of early July, no cholera cases had been reported in the refugee camps and sites hosting refugees from Mali throughout the country. To contain the epidemic, available water points are being treated and awareness campaigns being carried out using community volunteers and local radio stations.

All these crises represented a unique opportunity for ECB Niger Consortium member organizations for promoting accountability toward affected populations. The deployment of a Standing Team mission was requested in this particular context.

B. What we did
During the mission, the team conducted three major activities:
1. Facilitate a review workshop of the Consortium Self-Assessment Study CSAS findings.
2. Facilitate the training workshop on the Good Enough Guide focusing on the gaps identified during the CSAS review workshop
3. Facilitate a workshop on sharing experiences about complaints mechanisms management and how to develop an accountability framework.

I.   CSAS Report Review Workshop

The CSAS review workshop took place as scheduled on Nov 14-15 at Sahel Hotel. Xx participants from the seven ECB Niger Consortium member organizations attended the workshop.

1.1. Objectives

The objectives of the CESAS report review workshop were the following:

- Review the 2012 CSAS report and identified the gaps in implementing accountability in Niger
- Develop actions plan per organization to fill the gaps identified during the review workshop

1.2. Methods

The CSAS review workshop starts with introduction of participants, their expectations from the workshop and an overview of the workshop's objectives.

To meet the expectations, the methodology was articulated around three sessions:

- PowerPoint presentation: this introductive session provided an overview of the CSAS report, focusing on the Accountability aspects of the report. The 2012 results were compared with the 2011 and 2010 findings where applicable (questions 20 to 28)[1].

- Working groups: participants were divided into three groups. Each group was assigned some questions, the task being to identify the gaps in implementing the AIM[2] elements. The first group worked on questions Q20-23 and Q52 related to accountability framework, key elements, and tools and standards. The second group worked on question Q24-28 and Q53 related to best practices, performance measurement, and leadership. The third group worked on questions Q29-32 and Q45 related to transparency, participation, monitoring & evaluation, and complaints mechanisms.

- Actions plan per organization: participants from each member organization were asked to review the 2012 report, identify the gaps for the organization, determine the main causes, and identify appropriate actions to undertake. The actions plans also included the deadlines and the persons responsible for following up.

1.3. Key Findings

The groups could identify gaps in implementing accountability for all the questions except questions 26 and 30 (respectively: existence of a system to measure performance during an emergency response and overall commitment of the country office to transparency). The table 1 below summarizes the main gaps identified by the three groups.

Tableau 1: main gaps identified

Question	Group	Topic	Gap
Q20	1	Accountability framework	Weaknesses at all levels; each organization was supposed to have an accountability framework.
Q21	1	Use of Accountability	Weaknesses at all levels

---

[1] The way some results were presented in the reports did not allow comparison.
[2] Accountability and Impact Measurment

Question	Group	Topic	Gap
		framework	
Q22	1	N.A.	N.A.
Q23	1	Key elements of the Accountability framework	All results are not good; but we are more concerned with those related to Participation and Leadership/Governance
Q52	1	Accountability tools and standards in place	Each organization should have in place some tools and standards regarding Accountability; all results are insufficient.
Q53	1	Use of practical Accountability tools and/or standards	The result of 83.3% is not acceptable ; having tools and not using them is a problem
Q24	2	Awareness of and implementation of accountability good practices in emergencies	The gap of 16.7% for the implementation of good practices is not acceptable; it is not tolerable to know a practice and to not apply it. Additional effort is needed to reach 100% of implementation of good practices
Q25	2	Sources of answers to question 24	Knowledge of key accountability elements through Monitoring and Evaluation and Programs Reports/After Action Reviews needs to be strengthened.
Q26	2	Existence of a system to measure performance during an emergency response	Ok
Q27	2	If a system to measure performance exists, what is being measured?	The result for Quality & Accountability should be improved Performance in core priority sectors-clusters should also be improved
Q28	2	Country's office capacity in terms of Leadership of accountability practices	Senior staff commitment should be improved Performance management of senior managers includes how they teams implement humanitarian AIM standards of transparency, participation, Design and M&E, Feedback and Leadership & Governance. Monitoring of evaluation's findings and recommendations must be improved. More resources needed
Q29	3	Complaint/Feedback	Formal beneficiary feedback/complaint

Question	Group	Topic	Gap
		Mechanisms	mechanisms
			Effort to promptly address feedbacks not sufficient
			Deadlines for treatment of complaints
			Learning from complaints and mistakes
Q30	3	Overall commitment of the country office to transparency	Results acceptable according to the group
Q31	3	Overall participation of the affected population	Joint planning of projects with affected communities
			Participation of beneficiaries in the design of selection criteria during assessments
Q32	3	Country office current approaches to Design, Monitoring & Evaluation	Sharing appropriate feedback with beneficiaries
			Strengthen internal learning reviews for each project
Q45	3	Staff participation in collaborative activities	Coordinating emergency response

Participation in the CSAS review workshop attested that organizations are not that committed in the ECB Consortium activities. The standing steam mission was expected those who responded to the CSAS questions to attend the review workshop. Only one respondent was present. Other participants could be at least in charge of Accountability activities in their organizations; unfortunately this was not the case. One participant was new in his organization. Only one participant was on time for the workshop. At the beginning, only four organizations were represented. The Field Facilitator has to call to ensure that more participants came in the workshop. Even Care Niger, the host organization was not significantly represented (the Field Facilitator is from Care).

1.4. Recommendations & Next Steps

- For future CSAS review workshops, it is important that participants in the review workshop include those who directly participated in the survey. Other participants should be staff in charge of Accountability activities in their organizations, i.e. Emergency Coordinators, M&E/L Managers. We therefore recommend that the profile of participants be specified in the letters of invitation sent to the organizations.

- To make sure, activities related to ECB are timely and appropriated carried out, we recommend that ECB focal person at each Consortium member organization focuses only on activities related to ECB. That means each organization should have an ECB position within the organization. Currently, staffs in charge of ECB activities also have other important responsibilities so that they cannot really focus on ECB activities. Ideally, each Consortium member organization should have an ECB focal person position charged to ECB budget.

- Given the success of the AIM Standing Team, we recommend having Standing Teams for the other components of ECB mission (DRR and staff capacity building).

- We also recommend a stronger commitment from our agencies at country, regional and HQ levels. It is obvious that ECB is important for our organizations, otherwise they would not be member of ECB; however, in practice, priority is not always given to ECB activities.

Appendices

Actions plans for each of the seven ECB Niger Consortium member organizations: Care, CRS, Mercy Corp, OXFAM, Plan, Save the Children, and World Vision.

II. AIM Training

The AIM training workshop took place on November 20-21 in Niamey in Africa Hall conference room. 19 participants attend this workshop. They are from the seven Niger ECB members, local NGOs, National Early Warning System, National Food Security Crisis Unit, OCHA, and Red Cross/Red Croissant. Among participants we have programme and project managers; Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning specialists; field agents; programme secretary; payer.

The training was facilitated by Idrissa and Kassoum.

2.1. The key questions that can influence the manner of AIM implementation

To balance the needs of different groups on its decision making and activities and to measure changes, the difference that our projects make in the life of affected people during emergency, humanitarian organizations take many commitments toward stakeholders. Accountability to donors and host government is generally good enough but the main issue stays to have the best way to involve men, women, young and children affected by emergency in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of responses. To reach this, organization must have permanently in their mind the following key questions:

- What simple and practical AIM mechanisms do we have to put in place to reverse the trends and roles that give more power to affected people?

- What capacity building staff needs to fulfill organizations commitment on AIM?

- How organizations can facilitate AIM practices in their work?

- How can organizations fulfill their commitments specifically to primary beneficiaries (affected people)?

2.2. Brief explanation of current AIM practices

AIM to donors and host government is good enough because it is a kind of "obligatory accountability".

To primary beneficiaries, organizations try to ensure this through feed-back and complaints mechanism. Complaints committees are in place in the majority of communities but their establishment is not always respected the main steps of the process. The green line phone numbers have been also communicated to beneficiaries to give their feed-back and their complaints if needed. But few complaints are coming to organizations through these mechanisms. The cases treated are not documented. Community meeting and post distribution monitoring seem the best opportunity for beneficiaries to express their problems and to give their feed-back to project staff who treat them in informal manner.

2.3. Objectives

The aim of the training is to support learning process around accountability to communities and their population affected by disaster, through humanitarian projects impact measurement by using Good Enough Guide (GEG) tools.

The objectives are the following:

- Describe AIM basic elements

- Share current ideas and practices on AIM

- Link GEG tools to AIM's five principles

- Appreciate individual and organizational capacities on AIM

- Develop individual AIM action plan for each participant

2.4. Methods

The methods used are those described in the GEG. Most of the sessions are administered (see point 2.5). PowerPoint presentations and group exercises based on their field experiences have been used in the sessions to make the training very lively and to permit participant to see the gaps between what they are doing and what is recommended in GEG. Roles plays are also used to express some situation as tools using, true cases, etc.

At the end of the tainting, each participant has established an action plans on how he will practice AIM in his organization, his programme or his project.

2.5. Sessions

Nine sessions are administered:

1. Presentations
2. The Key concepts of AIM
3. The five steps of AIM
4. GEG tools
5. Making accountability happen
6. Workshop evaluation and closing activities

For details on each session see the workshop agenda.

2.6. Key Findings

- **AIM as something to consider in day to day work.** All of ECB members have been concerned to integrate accountability in their programmes particularly humanitarian. Most of them are dedicated a staff specifically for accountability or combined to monitoring, evaluation and learning.

- **An interest around a concept that is a little bit understood in terms of content and approach.** Most of participants are familiarized to the word accountability but affirm that they are not very aware of key elements and basic elements of AIM.

- **AIM to primary beneficiaries is still little structured and informal.** Although most of organizations have AIM framework and guidelines, there are no formal mechanisms that encourage the practice on the field. Feed-back and complaints are done occasionally and not documented because they are informally treated without durable solutions.

- **AIM basic elements implementation and respect of principles need a real attention from organizations SMT.** Beyond projects and programs, AIM is something to consider at organization level. Organizations SMT must have operational strategies to encourage AIM practice in the different units.

- **Many progress in some organizations that are not shared in the consortium.** Some of the organizations have made progress in AIM. Save the Children has an accountability framework and guidelines to design it. It has also a guideline to setup feed-back and complaints mechanism. CARE International has an accountability framework. OXFAM has a guideline to setup feed-back and complaints mechanism. Unfortunately, those important resources are not shared within the consortium and not encourage one of the consortium objectives that is learning.

2.7. Recommendations & Next Steps

- We encourage organization that are not yet structure or staff dedicated to AIM to do it and establish clearly the link between accountability and impact measurement.

- A real capacity building is needed for all of staff. People who are participated in this workshop are encouraged to implement their actions plan and organize training in projects and programmes.

- AIM to primary beneficiaries needs to be structured and formal. Organizations that have guidelines for this can lead this process with a good learning and knowledge management system.

- Organizations SMT must have operational strategies and organizational willpower to encourage AIM practice in the different units. We also recommend a stronger commitment from our agencies at country, regional and HQ levels. It is obvious that ECB is important for our organizations, otherwise they would not be member of ECB; however, in practice, priority is not always given to ECB activities.

- Knowledge sharing and mutual learning are necessary within the consortium. Resources that have developed in some organizations are very important and useful to implement AIM at organizational and programmes levels.

2.8. Appendices

- **Workshop Agenda**

  Jour 1

Début: 9h00

Présentations

M0-A1	Familiarisation des participants	30 mn
M0-A2	Présentation des objectifs et des règles de base de la formation	15 mn
Les concepts clés		
M1-A1	Questions fondamentales pour les travailleurs humanitaires	15 mn
M1-A2	Qu'est-ce que la redevabilité et quels éléments comporte-t-elle?	30 mn
M1-A3	Définition de la redevabilité	10 mn
M1-A4	Que signifie «Suffisamment Bon»?	10 mn
***Pause 11h 00 -11h 20, reprise avec des stimulants selon les besoins*		
M1-A5	La pratique du Guide Suffisamment Bon!	10 mn
M1-A6	Initiatives de redevabilité	25 mn
Les cinq étapes		
M2-A1	Cinq étapes pour la redevabilité et la Mesure de l'impact	10 mn
M2-A2	Impliquer les populations à chaque étape	20 mn
M2-A3	Les Cinq étapes: pourquoi, quand, quoi	30 mn
***Pause 13h 00-14h 00, reprise avec des stimulants selon les besoins*		
Les cinq étapes (suite)		
M2-A4	Réponse aux commentaires	60 mn
M2-A5	Défis liés à la mise en œuvre de la redevabilité (peut être répété à un moment donné)	30 mn
***Pause 15h 30-15h 45, reprise avec des stimulants selon les besoins*		
Les outils		
M3-A1	Comment faisons-nous en ce qui concerne l'information publique?	15 mn
M3-A2	Présentation des outils	15 mn
M3-A3	Lier les outils aux 5 étapes	30 mn
	Exercice de récapitulation	

Clôture: 17:00

  Jour 2

Début: 8h 30

	Exercice de récapitulation pour résumer les activités de la veille	30 mn
Les outils (suite)		
M3-A4	Interprétation des outils (facultative)	30 mn
M3-A5	Pratique des outils	90 mn
***Pause 11h 00 -11:20, reprise avec des stimulants selon les besoins*		

Faire que la responsabilité se réalise

M4-A1	Diffusion des messages clés	30 mn
M4-A2	Faisons-nous bien en tant qu'organisme?	50 mn

***Pause 13h 00 -14h 00, reprise avec des stimulants selon les besoins

Faire que la responsabilité se réalise (suite)

M4-A3	Visualisation de la redevabilité et plans d'action	75 mn
M4-A4	Oui, nous le pouvons!	10 mn

Evaluation de la formation et clôture des activités

- ### Workshop Evaluation Summary

1) ***Please rate the following categories on a scale of 1 – 4, where 4 = excellent and 1 = poor.***

	Notation				Total	# of respondents
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**		
The achievement of the workshop aims and objectives (%)	0	14	36	50	**100**	**14**
The meeting of your personal expectations (%)	7	7	50	36	**100**	**14**
The relevance of the content of the workshop to your work (%)	0	0	21	79	**100**	**14**
The pace and the balance of workshop to your needs (%)	0	7	71	21	**100**	**14**
The quality of the learning materials and aids (%)	0	0	64	36	**100**	**14**
The facilitation and presentation of the training (%)	0	0	57	43	**100**	**14**
The quality of the pre-training information received (%)	7	0	64	29	**100**	**14**
The quality of the venue and accommodation (%)	9	27	27	36	**100**	**11**

2) ***What parts of the workshop were most useful for you?***

In order:
1. Tools
2. Exercises and sketch
3. Five steps of AIM
4. Basic elements

3) ***What improvements/changes would you suggest for another workshop?***

- Respect of time
- Workshop duration, 3 days instead 2
- Share ToRs with participants

- Hold the workshop outside Niamey
- Assiduity of participants
- Link the five steps with HAP

4) 4) How will you use the Good Enough Guide in your work?

- To reinforce AIM to beneficiaries
- Train staff
- In field activities
- Constitute evidence base for project design

III. Workshop on sharing experiences about complaints mechanisms management and how to develop an accountability framework.

3.1. Objectives

The aim of this session is to share the organizations experiences on accountability framework and feed-back and complaints mechanisms

The following activities have been implemented:

- Share Save the Children experiences on accountability framework design and feed-back and complaints mechanisms guidelines
- Share OXFAM feed-back and complaints mechanisms experiences
- Share cases of complaints management from field

3.2. Participants

Participants are the same who participate in AIM training

3.3. Appendices

- **Agenda**

November, 21

Timing	Activité	Animateurs	Observations
9 :00 à 9 :30	Exercice de récapitulation pour résumer les activités de la journée du 20	2 participants	
9 :30 à 10 :00	Développement des Cadres de Redevabilité : Expérience de Save The Children	Ashley Bishop	Il ne s'agira pas d'élaborer des cadres de redevabilité pour les agences. STC partagera avec les participants son expérience dans le processus pour les aider dans l'élaboration de leur cadre de redevabilité.
10 :00 à 11 :00	Discussions et débats autour de la présentation	Kassoum	
11 :00 à 11 :30	Pause café		
11 :30 à 12 :10	Présentation des étapes/approches pour la mise en place des mécanismes de feed-back et de gestion des plaintes	Mahaboubou/Stéphanie Ashley Bishop	STC et OXFAM partageront la stratégie/étapes qu'ils suivent pour la mise en place des mécanismes de feed-back et de gestion des plaintes en 20 mn chacun.
12 :10 à 13 :00	Discussions et débats autour des	Idrissa	

Timing	Activité	Animateurs	Observations
	présentations		
13 :00 à 14 :00	Pause déjeuner		
14 :00 à 15 :30	Partage d'expériences sur la gestion des cas de plaintes des bénéficiaires	Idrissa	
15 :30 à 16 :00	Evaluation et clôture		

- **Save the Children documents shared**

- **OXFAM documents shared**