

Documentation of CARE Honduras' Experiences in Gender and Diversity

A collaboration of CARE Atlanta, Perú and Honduras

CONTENTS

1. Objectives and Methods of the Documentation Process	2
2. Background on the GED Initiative in Honduras	3
3. The Documentation Process and Findings	4
3.1 Methodology	4
3.2 The GED initiative at the regional level	5
3.3 Major findings of the GED initiative in CARE Honduras	6
3.3.1 Organizational climate	6
3.3.2 Equity	8
3.3.3 Coaching	9
3.4 Findings related to the objectives of the documentation process	10
3.4.1 How to build more representative, diverse and inclusive decision-making teams and processes	10
3.4.2 How to promote and retain women in leadership roles,	12
3.4.2 How to develop and implement policies to prevent and respond to sexual harassment.	13
3.5 The GED committee	14
3.6 Reflections from the documentation team	15
4. Thoughts for CARE	17
5. Documentation of the GED Process, by Marina Irigoyen	20
5.1 Personal impressions	20
5.2 Personal reflection	21
6. Annex	22
7.1 Tables of most significant changes	

1. Objectives and Methods of the Documentation Process

Over the last three years, CARE has promoted a global initiative to advance its gender and diversity policy. To that end, many country offices now implement successful actions and strategies in their chosen priority areas. Central American CARE countries (Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador) welcomed the initiative and decided to work as a team with Honduras taking the lead in coordination of a regional venture. By 2002, the four countries had jointly completed a gap analysis that provided baseline information, and since then have been implementing concrete actions to advance in the specific priorities identified by their respective baselines.

It has now been three years into the GED initiative and it was felt that this is the ideal time to share and learn from GED successes. CARE Atlanta has taken the lead in promoting an exchange among country offices engaged in the initiative and selected CARE Honduras as an example of a case for documentation. Thus, a documentation team comprised of three different parties, the Honduras GED committee, an external documenter from CARE Peru, and an external consultant, were tasked with recording the results of the CARE Honduras experience to date.

This narrative focuses on successes, experiences and learning in the following areas:

- What have been the most significant changes since the gap study in 2002;
- How to build more representative, diverse and inclusive decision-making teams and processes;
- How to promote and retain women in leadership roles; and
- How to develop and implement policies to prevent and respond to sexual harassment.

The documentation process is not only a valuable opportunity for Honduras to learn from their work and celebrate their successes but also to share with other countries hoping to contribute to the global GED initiative.

The present document synthesizes the findings resulting from a week of workshops, meetings and interviews in Honduras, along with a review of relevant documents. The narrative contained in section three includes personnel opinions towards the progress in the initiative, and the final section presents personal impressions and reflections of Marina Irigoyen, from CARE Peru about her experience as external documenter.



2. Background on the GED Initiative in Honduras

In 2002, CARE Honduras, Nicaragua and Guatemala, undertook a baseline study in organizational climate, trust, representation, organizational learning and gender and diversity. After the study, Salvador joined the initiative, and the regional team was successful in funding a proposal for a regional initiative for the next three years.

Each country then created a gender and diversity committee with staff from program and program support. Membership in the GED committee in Honduras has changed somewhat over these three years and is currently comprised by (mainly) women from the program support area, led by the Human Resources Coordinator.

The main findings identified during the base line study for Honduras were gender discrimination and a deteriorated organizational climate due to a combination of factors, such as inequity in salaries and resource allocation, power struggles between program and administration, a collective fear to express opinions, mistrust, heavy work loads, centralized decision-making processes and few opportunities for staff to grow and advance.

The findings from the study were presented firstly to the senior management team, where a few executives questioned the findings and tried to devalue and deviate the importance and relevance of the study. The study was then shared and discussed with all staff in five workshops in the central and field offices. This sharing process was strategically designed to promote staff participation with an emphasis on confidentiality, in consideration of the sensitive findings of the base line study. During these workshops, results from the study were verified by staff, and priorities and actions were collectively identified. Once the organization arrived at a consensus on the priority areas that required attention, concrete plans were developed and implemented.

The following year was difficult. The findings of the study were serious, and major changes needed to be made while the organization was divided with key personnel interfering with the process. The organization was also facing serious financial problems while dealing with a salary structure that was heavily biased towards executive staff. Major steps were taken with caution and proper support in the way of studies and external perspectives. Efforts were also made to resolve internal conflicts and to integrate the team towards a common vision. Much was achieved by changing the structure of the organization and this provided a better context for the organization to continue with its plans.

Presently, June 2005, and the context in which this documentation process takes place is one of change and uncertainty. A major program for the organization, Title II Program, is finishing its operations and it is not clear whether a new phase will be funded. This situation has caused uncertainty for a significant number of staff and has also affected their personal situation as adjustments have been made on their per diem. The integration of Central American offices for CARE is moving to a central regional leadership structure with one regional director. The present country director in Honduras is being transferred in the coming months.

3. The Documentation Process and Findings

3.1 Methodology

The methodology that we opted to use for consulting personnel was based in Appreciative Inquiry, Most Significant Changes and Open Space Technology, what we call “strength based methodologies”. In keeping with these methodologies, the focus of the inquiry is on what works well, and bringing forward examples of best practices. While we are aware that there are always challenges and difficulties in most organizations, those are not where we have put our attention in this opportunity. This document invites, you the reader, to also bring an inquiring and open mind to this work.

"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason of being"
-Albert Einstein.

The following section is a narrative told in the first person by the documentation team comprised by members of CARE Honduras' GED Committee, CARE Peru's external documenter and the external consultant who facilitated the process. The perspective of the documentation team is complemented by the views of CARE Honduras staff who were consulted and interviewed during the week-long process (their textual comments are in italics).

Recapture the story of the initiative. Our point of reference was the 2002 baseline study. We reviewed the pertinent documents and discussed it with members of the GED committee who assisted in recapturing the events and details.

Conversations with CARE Honduras staff. We facilitated two half-day workshops (regional and central offices), with the enthusiastic participation of 45 participants drawn from both program and program support. Those unable to attend the workshops (mainly managers and the director) we interviewed individually, a task shared among members of the GED committee. We also facilitated a focus group discussion with five women in leadership positions from program support in the central office.

The workshops started with a personal and collective reflection guided by the following questions:

- What has been the most significant change in your working environment over the past two to three years?
- What factors have allowed this change to happen?
- What is the most significant change in your professional life over the past two to three years?
- What factors have allowed this change to happen?

We followed with group discussions using Open Space Technology, a methodology that allows the group complete control to define the themes to discuss, as well the flexibility for every participant to move around and engage in the theme(s) that they feel most passionate about. We initially proposed to the group the themes trust, diversity, coaching and decision-making processes. The groups added the themes poverty, values, commitment and participation in politics. All the themes were open and people joined in the discussions, with the exception of the theme diversity, that had no audience.

At the final part of the workshops, Marina Irigoyen shared experiences from Peru with the group and responded to their questions.

The individual interview guidelines contained the same questions and themes as those addressed during the workshops with two additions, sexual harassment and women in leadership positions. With the focus group we limited the conversation to the theme of women in leadership.

At the conclusion of the information gathering stage, we analyzed and organized the responses according to the major themes. The personal reflections of the participants in the workshops were also organized and are presented in tables in the annex of this document.

3.2 The GED Initiative at the Regional Level

The GED initiative has contributed to the policies and criteria for the regional integration of CARE in Central America. The baseline studies were done following the same strategies and tools in order to have a regional perspective as well as a regional baseline. Subsequent action plans and sharing of experiences were done on the basis of cross visits and regional workshops. A set of regional human resource policies were revised using a rights based approach (RBA):

Regional Policies revised under Rights Based Approach.

- Social equity policy (internal and external). Presents a code of practice, definitions and procedures for sexual harassment.
- Gender equity (internal and external). Includes guidelines for political incidences, learning, leadership and empowerment.
- HIV/AIDS (internal and external). Emphasizes on the commitments towards prevention, with four guiding principles, education, equity, program and organizational commitments.
- Recruitment, selection and promotion of staff.
- Participation of staff in their own development. Includes objectives and guiding principles related to organizational climate, personnel development and personnel management.
- Salaries. Establishes a clear definition of positions and their value, to guarantee salary equity.

The main regional activities supported by the GED initiative were:

- Workshop for planning the baseline study, Guatemala, 2002.
- Sharing of the experiences of socializing the baseline study, preparation of action plans, Nicaragua 2002.
- Workshop on appreciative inquiry and its application in strategic planning, Guatemala, 2003.
- Workshop to define a regional equity strategy, Honduras, 2003.
- Revision of human resource policies under rights based approach, Honduras, 2004.

3.3 Major findings of the GED Initiative in CARE Honduras

Based on the findings of the base line study in 2002, the organization focused its plans and resources in the following areas:

- Organizational climate
- Equity
- Coaching

3.3.1 Organizational climate

What was our guiding vision?

“We aim to create an environment of trust, respect and open communication by promoting closer sharing among staff and their families as well as a greater balance between work and family.”

What changes did we make?

We created a more horizontal organizational structure and in the process, we adjusted work loads. We added a new internal value to CARE’s values, “balance between work and family”, and we stressed its importance.

We trained members of the GED committee as well as program staff, as facilitators in Appreciative Inquiry. We introduced the methodology to the different projects and facilitated several dynamics with staff so that they could see opportunities and qualities rather than problems and disadvantages.

Several initiatives to create a better environment in our offices, such as:

- Created a special space (kiosk in the roof of the building) for breaks, rest, informal and social gatherings.
- An activity to welcome staff in the morning with the theme “share a smile, you are a special person”,
- Celebrated the birthdays of the month,
- A picnic with staff and their families to celebrate CARE Honduras's 50th anniversary.

What did the staff view as the most significant changes?

A review of the information from the workshop and individual interviews, revealed that results for personal changes and organizational changes are very similar. Therefore, we are combining these results in our discussion in this section.

Staff expressed that the environment in the organization is one of trust and that people feel free to express their opinions. *There is a greater openness for listening and expressing ideas. The senior management team has an 'open door' culture and is receptive to staff participation. Communication with supervisors has improved and we feel an environment of trust and respect amongst colleagues.*

An effective communication process is established. *The information that flows through the different levels of the organization is the same. Being informed of what is happening has given us confidence in our work.*

Our team is very transparent. We do not hide the bad things, we face them and search for support when needed.

A few persons experienced instability in their jobs and higher work loads due to personnel cuts in the last months due to the reduction of the Title II Program.

According to the staff, what are the factors instrumental in promoting significant changes?

An effective communication with our supervisors and our colleagues. *Being informed about the successes of the organization. The overall conviction and resolve in the decision-making process.*

Camaraderie and group support. *The recognition of the abilities of the team. The good image that each person has demonstrated in achieving their goals. A desire to unify ideas.*

Organizational culture. *Flexibility in the way the job is done, a change in the organizational culture. A change in the attitude of management. Cross visits between teams and programs, informal gatherings promote trust.*

3.3.2 Equity

What was our guiding vision?

“We aim to have clearly defined policies consistent with CARE’s new vision, a rights based approach, along with a more horizontal organizational structure and processes that favor active staff participation. We want more equity in the distribution of resources such as salaries, benefits, and per diem.”

What changes did we make?

We shared with staff, the six regional policies based on rights based approach described previously. The Human Resource Coordinator traveled to the field and met with staff during their regular meetings.

An equity strategy for the CA region was developed with the participation of representatives from the communities, regional colleagues, and staff from Honduras (program and program support). The activities for designing the new DAP for the Title II Program were done under rights based programming. An exciting example was the participation of the communities in the design of the new DAP under this approach.

Other major changes are:

- Changes in the per diem policy to equalize it for all levels of staff.
- The senior management team broadened to include all units and staff from different levels.
- A survey to identify staff’s perceptions towards HIV/AIDS, facilitated workshops to discuss this topic with staff.

What did the staff view as the most significant changes?

We have a more horizontal structure now. *More in terms of process, in which the levels of consultation have been leveled. There are more opportunities for staff to participate.*

The power structures are more democratic. *Relationships are more horizontal, titles and positions have lost their significance. There is a better integration among staff, the relationship between programs and program support is good.*

There have been more opportunities for staff at all levels. *New initiatives are implemented by teams with staff from different levels and different departments. There are more opportunities for training at all levels, opportunities that previously were only available to management staff.*

According to staff, what are the main factors that have been instrumental in promoting significant changes?

Expansion of the senior team. *Along with the structural changes, it has welcomed participation and kept people informed.*

Administrative decentralization. *Now they are more agile and require less paper work. There is more order, we have worked as a team correcting the processes.*

Rights based programming and gender and diversity. *These are now considered as transversal axes in all the activities of the organization and this has been unifying.*

3.3.3 Coaching

What was our guiding vision?

“A management style that favors communication and staff development.”

What changes did we make?

A clear plan for coaching was developed, with the following major activities:

- A workshop with 40 staff (management, supervision and coordination), to define the concepts of coaching, to prepare a dictionary with terminology and concepts and to define a model of coaching for the organization,
- Workshops in leadership and learning, including a workshop on Ropes to promote team work and the acceptance of change,
- Workshops on management for competencies
- A pilot project for a 360 degree staff evaluation, to unify plans and criteria for staff development.

What did the staff view as the most significant changes?

Staff stated that management teams are more open and are facilitating spaces for listening to their ideas and for promoting teamwork. They also feel that their opinions are valued and respected by the rest of the team.

Giving and receiving coaching has favored an environment of trust, the results from our work are valued more.

The senior management team is more realistic and the barriers towards management have diminished.

According to staff, what are the main factors instrumental in promoting significant changes?

The openness and support from management and the organization. *The fact that the Director has opened the decision-making process at the directional level, has had an impact in the way decisions are made in other instances. The opportunity to participate in decision-making processes and staff development. Staff meetings. Being valued for our ideas and not for our positions.*

The 360 Degree Pilot. The processes related to coaching have improved the relationships among the different levels of staff. Particularly, staff valued the 360 degree evaluation process for competencies as a good example of an inclusive process. The process allows a person to guide and at the same time be guided. Staff that participated in this pilot initiative indicated that the feedback they received helped them in changing and improving their image.

Training and workshops in coaching, the administration of human resources and the support from the Human Resource Unit.

Summary of where the most significant organizational changes occurred:

Organizational climate	24%
Diverse and inclusive teams	20%
Structures and processes	18%
Equity, gender and diversity	15%
Staff development	15%
Partnership	9%

3.4 Findings related to the objectives of the documentation process

3.4.1 How can we build more representative, diverse and inclusive decision-making teams and processes?

The example that best illustrates progress in this objective (and was highly valued during the consultation process), is the strategy the office established for starting new initiatives such as: the Knowledge Management Project, the GED Committee, the Celebration of the 50th Anniversary, the Competency Promotion Team, and the Emergency Committee. These teams are represented from staff chosen from different units and levels from both

program and program support. They are considered as an opportunity for staff to broaden their relationships, their perspective of the organization, and expand their responsibilities to new areas. These initiatives are considered by staff, as valuable learning experiences, an opportunity to contribute to an organizational priority that is very different from their work, and to exercise leadership skills.

We had the opportunity to talk with a person from finances from the central office who is part of the team of the Knowledge Management initiative. She told us, with much enthusiasm, how this opportunity has allowed her to learn about the rural conditions in her country, to talk with people from the communities and to share with field staff. This experience has helped her better understand the reality of her country and the kind of work that CARE does.

The design of the new DAP for Title II, was also mentioned as an example of an inclusive and participatory process, whereby all staff were involved in different activities and workshops for this purpose (something that had not happened previously). In addition, the process included community consultation focusing on rights based programming.

What are some of the factors for building diverse and inclusive teams?

Flexibility, especially by management, that allows staff to participate in initiatives far beyond their direct job responsibilities. **Organizational support**, in terms of time and resources allocated to these groups.

The overall **interest by staff** to seek more diversity in their work and welcome opportunities to contribute to the organization's initiatives.

In addition, a **clear vision**, during the process of recruitment, has been a factor contributing in advancing of diversity under an equity perspective that does not compromise the professional quality of the organization. During this consultation, staff mentioned that the new people that have joined the organization are bringing good ideas and a good attitude.

Most significant changes in how CARE's work on building diverse and inclusive teams is reflected in its programs

Although the present document focuses on internal changes that enhance CARE as a rights based organization, some staff stated that the most significant changes are related to the work with partners and communities. These include, for example:

A higher community participation and interest from farmers. Greater women participation in training, decision-making processes and the generation of jobs and wealth. Better partnerships with other organizations.

I feel more identified with the vulnerable population and have a greater sensitivity towards the problems of vulnerable populations. I feel more empowered by the meaning of the information that comes from the field.

3.4.2 How can we promote and retain women in leadership positions?

CARE Honduras has been very successful in recruiting, promoting and retaining women in leadership positions. According to the operational plans of the last two years, women have represented between 45 and 50% of management positions, mainly in finance and administration. Their presence in programming has increased in the latest recruitments. However, in other levels of the organization, they represent between 27 and 29% during that same period.

During individual interviews, the general opinion is that CARE provides equal opportunities to men and women, and they both have the same abilities to be in leadership positions. Women from the central office stated that CARE had supported them when new opportunities had opened up. All of them have been promoted over the years to higher responsibilities. They are grateful that CARE values the human aspect of people, and appreciate the flexibility allowed to attend to family needs when required. *Our family is first.*

What are the main factors that have contributed to promote and retain women in leadership positions?

The equity policy, being recognized for our abilities, and not for being women, gives us confidence and recognition of our work.

Our commitment towards CARE, our dedication towards our work. Knowing that we have opportunities to grow as far as we want to. Having the space to grow, even though we don't have professional careers.

The diversity that the job brings, even when staying in the same position, always gives us an opportunity to develop our capacities to do different things.

The flexibility in the workplace to balance work with family, having among CARE's values one that promotes that balance.

Future conversations...

How can we promote women's participation in community development in a restrictive cultural context and in areas with increasing security concerns?

How can the requirements for those positions be revised in such a way that would welcome a higher participation of women? Can more flexibility in terms of work schedules and work locations open more opportunities for women to participate?

As we discussed during our week in Honduras, this is definitely a priority for CARE Honduras and one where efforts are being made. We heard of an example of an educational program that hired women staff and by the end of the month, they all had resigned because of the remote nature of the working conditions.

Competencies as part of the criteria for recruitment can present interesting opportunities for advancing in this area, where personal abilities are valued as well as technical ones.

This is especially relevant in a setting where some careers have been traditionally dominated by men, such as agriculture and engineering.

3.4.3 How can we develop and implement policies to prevent and respond to sexual harassment?

The GED initiative created a favorable environment for the discussion on this issue. During the baseline interviews a person reported her case which was dealt with according to policy procedures and much experience was gained. Prevention of sexual harassment is considered a priority for CARE Honduras and the policy is taken seriously. There has been progress made internally, however, much more needs to be done to guarantee the compliance of this policy externally. It is a challenge to monitor and implement the policy in remote and insecure areas, for both our staff and partners. We have experienced a hurtful case of a colleague raped by a community member.

Hopefully, the environment of trust instilled by the Director and the Human Resources Unit, will favor compliance with this policy. As mentioned previously, the sexual harassment policy has been revised and shared amongst personnel. Monitoring for the implementation of this policy externally will have to be developed jointly with partners and community representatives.

Future conversations...

How do we manage confidentiality? Who should know about the situation? It is difficult to manage confidentiality when one needs to interview staff and gather information to analyze a sexual harassment case.

It is not so easy to investigate cases of this nature; they tend not to be clearly black and white. Within the organization, points of view vary and the case can cause much internal division.

The most challenging part while revising the policy was to define and agree on the attitudes and behaviors that were not accepted, given local cultural norms. It was also challenging to arrive at a consensus in defining sexual harassment.

The country's legislation can constitute a limiting factor for a transparent process since an organization is not able to fire a person for sexual harassment unless proven guilty by a criminal court. Usually the person affected is reluctant to file a case in criminal court because the process is very slow and they ask for very detailed proofs. The process can be seen contradictory, in a way. The organization takes on the role of a criminal court and is not able to be completely open about the process.

3.5 The GED committee

The last three years have represented a period of tremendous growth and change for those involved in CARE Honduras' GED Committee. The following are some quotes that express the views and feelings of the committee members and which illustrate the underlying basis of their commitment to the process:

What were our driving forces?

Take this opportunity for organizational growth. The desire to see a better and different working environment, the dream of "a better scene". Credibility in the process, knowing that there were opportunities out there available for us. The feeling of being listened to and having the space for confronting problems.

Support from programs and the political will we received from the Director has been fundamental for our work.

The diversity of the group, even though we were mostly women, we all had different ideas and working styles.

The appreciative inquiry methodology that gave us flexibility and has allowed us to express ourselves to our leaders and improve the organizational climate. The methodology has helped us identify ways to focus on our activities, to look for positive successes rather than the negative aspects.

The persistence of some of its members and the collective interest. Even though we did not assign a head for the group, the coordinator for Human Resources assumed a critical leadership role. The freedom we had during our meetings where anyone could stand and facilitate the discussions.

How did we work?

We were very prudent in the decision-making process. Whenever we needed more information, we always looked for advice from other people, however, we always decided collectively.

There was always an openness for people to participate in the initiatives of the committee, people joined and left spontaneously, nobody was ever questioned about their personal decisions, it was always an open process.

What do we consider as some of our main factors of success?

A real political will. The GED initiative was recognized by CARE as a priority, we had funds and technical support to implement our action plans.

The staff's high expectations of our plans and their contribution to our activities were also fundamental. Staff response to GED proposals was open and receptive.

Occasionally we did not feel capable of implementing some activities and we hired consultants for support. We persevered under difficult circumstances even though sometimes we just wanted to “throw the towel in.”

How do we feel? What have we learned?

We have been able to consolidate our group, not only professionally, but also personally. I feel proud of being part of the team because we have seen organizational changes that we sponsored. I also feel a bit pressured by not having much time, however, I feel motivated to continue. I also feel that we have worked mostly internally and, that in the future, we need to focus on working with our partners and communities.

I learned that one can achieve objectives when believing in them. It is about self motivation. Things that are assigned as organizational mandates don't work that well.

I learned to be more tolerant with other people and myself, to understand that we all have different motivations, interests and work styles.

3.6 Reflections from the documentation team

Equity. For CARE Honduras, the concept of equity has facilitated the understanding and the consensus in gender and diversity. Probably because equity and human rights are concepts with roots more ancient and universal than the concept of gender. The concept of gender is relatively new for this culture and the fact that its interpretation has changed over the years has caused certain confusion.

In the regional workshop we facilitated for developing a gender strategy, in a session on personal reflection, the group expressed how the word gender had no real meaning to them and how they preferred to use the word equity instead. The result from the workshop was therefore, the equity strategy.

Diversity is a concept worthy of a more extensive dialogue and further exploration. Currently, it is mainly interpreted as religious, social, economical and cultural by most staff. There are marked reservations by staff in relation to HIV/AIDS (according to a survey done by the organization) and sexual orientation. In addition, its wider interpretation under the rights based approach can also be explored further with staff.

As mentioned previously, staff value diversity in their workplace and an extension in their relationships. It was also found that staff appreciated job rotation, a strategy that has been used to prepare when a person is going to be absent for whatever reason. What about job rotation as an informal mechanism for teams to become familiar with someone else's work? Imagine starting your day with this question.... Who wants to do my job today?

Participatory decision-making processes. As the organization advances in opening spaces for decision-making processes we feel the importance to open a dialogue about the meaning of participation in these instances. In an inclusive participatory decision-making process, staff participate until the final decision is made. Our goal is that at the end of the process, each person is satisfied that his or her ideas and opinions were heard with respect and accepts and supports the group's decision regardless whether this decision represents his or her own.

Trust is a fundamental element to the advancement in the areas of equity and coaching. In a way, it is all related and thus important to consider it in a more holistic framework. However, we might venture to say that trust was the fundamental factor for promoting the most significant changes.

The GED initiative was successful in having a wide perspective and implementing a series of actions from different angles. From making changes in its structure and processes, to opening spaces for discussing diverse themes of general interest, to increasing staff abilities and giving them tools that gave them security in the performance of their work. The GED initiative presented an unique opportunity, in the words of a participant from one of the workshops, *"to talk about themes that we never had space to talk about before, the human aspect."* This was an initiative that had a strong organizational intention, with a significant number of people convinced and working towards effecting changes, a process that has developed a positive momentum.

Organizational change starts with personal transformation...

"I think it takes at least 10% of the people to change their level of consciousness to change the planet. And the reason I say 10% is that this ratio is mirrored in nature. When we look at the world of bacteria, for example, there are 10% good bacteria, 10% bad, and a majority of 80% opportunistic bacteria that could go either way. In looking at the various global challenges we are faced with, and the tasks we need to fulfill for the planet, if we could get more than 10% of the people consciously aware, then I believe we could pull the 80% in that direction too"

–Dr. Masaru Emoto, author of the Messages from Water.



4. Thoughts for CARE

The GED Committee in Honduras

The GED Committee is highly recognized by the staff for its contribution in facilitating diverse activities, primarily related to organizational and personal development, that are beyond the scope of gender and diversity.

After three years of significant work, within a context of high staff turnover and heavy workloads, this might be a good time to think about the GED Committee's future form and purpose. Up to date, the Committee has facilitated and directly implemented most of the activities under this initiative. It would be interesting to think of other ways in which it can continue to support organizational development in a more detached manner, more as a coach that inspires and guides processes that will involve more active staff participation. How can the Committee inspire staff to get more involved in leading special activities under this initiative? What about task forces that work on a particular theme over a limited time period?

The Committee could also consider the idea of transferring some of its responsibilities to all the areas in the organization. The committee could thus focus on other areas and experiment different ways of working.

This is also a good time to reflect on ways to strengthen the Committee by means of broader staff participation. We have entertained the idea of rotating the coordination role among different departments in the organization. In addition, perhaps, the Committee could adopt a different name that more closely represents its future vision and would encourage broader staff participation.

It is up to the Committee members to decide a future strategy and hopefully they will be able to spend a few days in the Bay Islands doing this. Preparing a global plan with a clear vision would be wonderful to guide some of the future initiatives of the organization.

Rights based programming

How to support the communities in most need under remote and insecure conditions? How can we build diverse teams that can support programs in these areas? How can we promote a respect for human rights for both our staff and participants under these circumstances? This is a continuing conversation on how our work can promote changes in livelihoods and life styles that goes beyond the immediate scope of our programs.

Poverty and the role of NGOs is a theme of much interest to the staff in Honduras. This was proposed in both workshops held during the documentation process. We are always on the search for ways to increase the impact of our programs and an open global forum could be very interesting.

In relation to the theme of poverty, in one of the workshops the discussion focused on how our perceptions, language and the focus of our proposals, influence the results of our work. What is the effect of considering our partners as “poor”? Working on “poverty”? A search for a different language could be another interesting theme to open a conversation, A change in our language can change our thinking, and thus favor a strategic change for CARE.

Regionalization

How can the process of Central American integration build on the GED initiative?

The GED experience has been a major contribution in unifying criteria and strengthening relationships among staff in the region. In Honduras, it represents the basis and starting point for further initiatives since it has credibility on the part of the staff, and also from the rest of the region.

The new leadership guiding the regional integration process could consider taking CARE Honduras’ GED experience – its successes, its strategies -- into account as a proven model that is capable of inspiring changes.

Support to regional initiatives and cross-country sharing

How can we facilitate spaces for sharing among countries that are more experiential?

We need to create opportunities where we can share our ideas in a more informal, personalized and human way. Having Marina Irigoyen from Peru be a part of the documentation process was much appreciated by everyone because *we were able to relate to the stories she told us.*

We need to create opportunities where we can talk about diverse themes beyond the standard exchanges about technical and program issues, important as these may be.

Hopefully, CARE will value and facilitate the conversation from themes more related to integral human development.

Active support at the highest levels

The GED vision and strategy has a strong support from CARE International. It remains a challenge for country offices to make it real. The experience in CARE Honduras demonstrates the positive results that can be achieved when a Country Director welcomes the opportunity to guide a process of positive change. The Country Director can model an example of what is valuable for the organization, and inspire staff to move in that direction. “Organizations move in the direction of the most frequently asked questions”

Even though this three year process is considered “an initiative,” it can become an embedded organizational philosophy, when it is integrated into everything the organization does. GED does not happen in isolation; like a budget, it is immersed in every decision

and every action the organization takes. It is a way of thinking, and a conversation that unifies an organization because we all agree on the same principles and we all want the same things.

An organizational culture that embraces GED, is like a large umbrella that provides an environment of trust and respect allowing people and organizations to flourish and become the best they can be.

5. Documentation of the GED Process in Honduras, by Marina Irigoyen

5.1 Personal impressions

- After implementing diverse actions over a period of three years, what we can see is a real interest, first from the Country Director, and also from the GED Committee and staff. The results from this study show progress in experiences and a team with a strong commitment to address critical areas.
- There has been significant progress in the normative process (particularly the 5 policies based on rights and the one on salaries) that are beginning to provide guidance and are being internalized by staff. We see, as well, concrete actions on staff promotions where Human Resources has a method for assessing the positions and the salary structure.
- Staff continues to assert freedom to express their opinions, although they still express some reservations about areas where there might be repercussions. In general, there is evidence of empowerment and the feeling that CARE values its employee. Many state that at present staff opinions are considered, that they are being listened to, although recently staff experienced poor representation, not in the process, but in the way a decision was taken in relation to the per diem policy. In this process, staff were consulted but, at the end, a decision that did not represent their own was taken. This can be seen as a breach in a participatory decision-making process.
- There is respect and consideration towards the GED Committee, especially to its current leader, the Human Resources Coordinator. This process of consultation was welcomed with enthusiasm and the GED Committee, Country Director and staff showed good organization, commitment and dedication.
- Staff mentioned an improvement in the organizational climate, the opportunity to express opinions and an environment of trust towards supervisors and Human Resources. Opinions with respect to improvements in teamwork and working relationships have been recorded.
- A plan for competencies development is on the agenda, although, to date there have not been many steps taken in practice. Nevertheless, this theme is considered to be of vital importance.
- There is no evidence of significant gender inequity, although there are some indications that some men have “machista” attitudes. There is always a risk of infringements towards female colleagues or persons in the communities.
- In a way, this has been a process of organizational change far beyond the more narrow expectations of a GED initiative.

6.2 Personal reflection

This has been a reflective experience, both personal and institutional. That is, based on the documentation of the GED experience in Honduras, I have been able to find processes that are similar to ours in the CARE Peru office. We were fortunate to have a gap study in 2004, but did not address the gender theme. **This was done in a complex situation of major organizational changes and financial constraints, which resulted in very critical conclusions, demoralization and pessimism, devaluing the positive aspects that every office has. We should therefore, be conscious of the context in which we carry out our studies because these bear directly upon the mood of the personnel. In the case of Peru, the study reflected a stage in the life of the office and not the underlying situation.**

A lesson is that implementing this type of study is a task for the medium term whereby one can deal with staff layoffs and periodic evaluations, such as what is currently happening in Honduras. Very seldom are there “ideal conditions” but one must try to avoid moments of “high stress” in order to arrive at a comprehensive image. I see that the studies and processes in Honduras are framed within this logic. A virtue of this process that I personally praise, is the fact that it has not been interrupted. Surely there were highs and lows, yet one can perceive that the overall effort was sustained, as was the commitment of the Director, the head of Human Resources and the GED Committee to move forward with the work. It remains to be seen whether the burden of these tasks will not exhaust people.

Another important theme is the wisdom with which serious conflicts, such as the sexual harassment case, have been faced. It has been treated confidentially in the committee and with much respect to the person affected, trying to overcome frictions between some people when sanctions were taken against the aggressor. However, the main thing is that a policy was established and norms were set in order to prevent new cases and to guide the possible situations that might come up. I find this behavior very healthy.

Finally, this has been an good opportunity to get to know the office in Honduras and its work team, and experience their commitment towards their country and the organization. I find it impressive how a program support team goes beyond their administrative tasks to support a broader development effort. In this respect, I consider it a model of the kind of work that we could develop in Peru, within the context of constant change that we live.



CLIMATE (24%)

to express without fear (5)
with our supervisor
ment of commitment (4)
long colleagues (3)
od relationships
n from the director, more
port to our work
climate
y personal life
environment related to
ration

DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE TEAMS (20%)

Better performance, harmony, commitment and achievements for the teams (6)
Better relationships between teams, supervisors and staff (3)
Better coordination between programs, departments, better collaboration between teams (2)
Staff are being consulted when structural changes are being made
Staff's opinion's are respected
Changes in the way decisions are being made, higher participation and communication among the different levels in the organization
Better coaching and support from my boss
Higher responsibility towards mi work, and the achievement of my goals

MENT (15%)

to other positions (3)
learn, workshops (3)
nicians, as women
training
ormation related to
nowledge
of CARE's work
sonal development

STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES (18%)

Better administration of donor's resources (2)
Decentralization of processes, more agile (2)
Better administration of human resources
The way the program has adapted to the changes in the country
Retire of key personnel due to lack of funds
Central America Integration
Coaching model
Knowledge Project
New working strategies, new initiatives
The sustainability strategy
Cross country visits
Per diem adjustments

EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

(internal and external) (15%)

Better integration, equitable participation from all staff in different processes and activities (5)
Higher women's participation in training and decision making process, higher contribution in generating employment and wealth (3)
Personnel selection more equitable
Staff participation in the organization's initiatives, outside the circle of managers and supervisors
New ways of working
Opening for new conducts and the discussion of new themes

PARTNERSHIPS (9%)

Higher community participation and higher interest of farmers (3)
Greater sense of belonging towards the vulnerable population
To work with the excluded population
Partnerships with other organizations
Expansion of programs to urban regions

CLIMATE

Communication with boss and all levels (5)
Support of all staff (4)
Acceptance to change (2)
Work climate (2)
Capabilities of the team
Member of the

PERSONAL ATTITUDE

Attitude and commitment towards our work (3)
An interest for learning
Willingness and disposition to do our work
Valuing ourselves and our colleagues
Our disposition to work as a team
My personal commitment to achieve my goals

DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE TEAMS

A collective involvement of all staff and teams towards a shared vision and goals (4)
Openness and objectivity from the director to listen to opinions, opportune decision-making (4)
Coaching from supervisors (2)
Creative and agile management
Diverse teams for coordinating new initiatives
Decision-making innovative based on the needs of the organization and its personnel

as
by the directional level
Each employee has demonstrated
per goals

STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

Training, workshops and program processes (5)
Training and awareness of personnel management, support from the HR unit (3)
Transparency in the process (2)
Using the regular program events as a mean of communication in other aspects (2)
Cross country visits and experience sharing
Opportunities and resources that CARE provides (2)
Working strategies promoted by the organization
Personnel cuts due to budgetary constraints
The administrative requirements by the programs
To provide a more efficient service to clients
Participation in meetings.
Staff development

PARTNERSHIP

Better communication with clients
Staff's identification towards target population

AND DEVELOPMENT

office (religion, socio-economical)
on denominator in all the
good ideas and good attitude
the organization
ts, gender and diversity

EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL TENDENCIES

Program cycles
Globalization, a demand to be more productive
A lack of donors to have program stability
Regionalization

CLIMATE

... with freedom and without
... able to ask questions, express
... as (5)
... er diem allocation and
... of the programs (2)
... on and relationships (2)
... lity for personnel cutbacks (2)
... ent
... o change
... colleagues
... rking area
... the world of socializing with
... ow people support each other
... vironment
... more tension in my work
... riendships anymore
... e employee receives from
... ding of the value of the
... omes from field staff

DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE TEAMS

A better team integration in all areas and diverse activities (4)
A sense of feeling as a fundamental part of the organization in achieving its goals (3)
Being able to share and practice my abilities, knowledge and ideas, and propose goals (3)
Higher opportunities to participate in the decision making process of programs and admin (3)
Higher responsibilities, better coordination of our processes and our work (2)
More confident knowing that I can count on my colleagues that support me
Better understanding of CARE's work
More dedication and commitment to my work
Higher participation in different environments, Inside and outside the organization
I have learned how to work with the different mystic of every project

PARTNERSHIP

Better relationships with beneficiaries
A better understanding of the beneficiaries and Realizing the importance of doing my work with efficiency and efficacy
Greater sensitivity towards the problematic of the vulnerable population
Higher empowerment in relation to the meaning of the information that comes from the field

AND DIVERSITY

... staff to participate in
... nly management participated
... ntribution of women in the field

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL

DEVELOPMENT

More knowledge in diverse aspects thanks to training, workshops and the diversity in our regular work (6)
New learning from having occupied different positions in the organization (4)
I have improved my abilities to perform my job, I have more confidence in my work (3)
I have developed a willingness to learn and continue with my studies (2)
My thinking is more strategic now, and much more committed to CARE's vision
Greater professional growth and more experience in my relationship with others
More commitment in my work and more disposition to live in constant change
Having a sense of belonging
A better work commitment towards my unit, programs, donors and partners
More knowledge of admin processes
Better knowledge of technical, social and economical factors, more familiarity
I am more organized and more responsible
I have learned about competencies, initiatives, new systems and tools
A better ability to deal with different personalities

For the most significant personal changes

ED Honduras, June 2005

6. Annex

CLIMATE

cracy
different activities of the
ne successes and progress
ity of management
vours changes
st and openness
ailable at all levels

PERSONAL DISPOSITION

My own initiative and attitude to learn and grow (8)
My self esteem and dedication (3)
A change of mentality and my adaptability to my
environment (3)
Responsibility to achieve my goals
Staying competitively to the current changes

STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

Openness and coaching from the director, management
and the overall organization (10)
Opportunities and training we have received (7)
Team meetings (2)
Opportunities to participate in the decision-making and
In the development of process (3)
Appreciative Inquiry
The program's emphasis and strategies
Opportunities to grow to different positions
Support from consultants
Personnel cuts have increased the work loads

AND DIVERSITY

y your ideas and not by

DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE TEAMS

A recognition of my abilities and my
supervisor's trust in how I do my work (4)
Support from my colleagues and team (3)
The formation of multidisciplinary teams in
the organization
Job delegation

PARTNERSHIP

Knowledge shared with partners

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS

Economical situation of the programs (3)
My family that supports me (2)
Globalization
Central American Integration

parenthesis indicates number of persons that shared that opinion