



CHANGE FOR CHILDREN (CFC)

Project Evaluation Policy

Rationale

For Change for Children (CFC), evaluation is the systematic assessment of the design, implementation and results of our development, humanitarian, and campaign interventions (projects, programs, brigades, and advocacy initiatives) that considers their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Evaluation is an integral component of the learning cycle, which is essential for maximizing CFC's effectiveness in achieving its mission. The purpose of this policy is to support strong and innovative evaluation practices at CFC and amongst our partner organizations. This policy applies to all evaluations of programs and projects which appear in CFC's strategic and operational plans.

With the adoption of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) in November 2017, CFC recognizes that the achievement of all 17 goals requires the responsible, transparent and sustainable execution of all development efforts. Project evaluation informs the development of future programs and projects, helps us to be accountable for the resources with which we have been entrusted, and ensures that we are transparent in our program practice.

Principles

CFC is committed to rights-based development, addressing a wide range of development and humanitarian issues by seeking the transformation of unequal gender and power relations at the national, regional and international levels. As a rights-based organization, accountability, particularly to the communities we seek to serve, is of the highest importance to us. For CFC, accountability requires us to regularly and honestly assess the quality of our work, share and learn from its findings with primary stakeholders, and apply that learning in future work. At the same time, accountability demands that CFC build the capacity of partners so that they themselves develop more effective practice in evaluation.

We believe there is strength in the diversity of our partner organizations and the range of our efforts, which are shaped by the complex and dynamic contexts within which we work. We acknowledge that evaluation is carried out in many different contexts, where knowledge and values are cultural, socially and temporally contingent and intertwined with power relations. We attempt to manage this complexity by our willingness to innovate, experiment, and adjust. We also recognize that there are many different evaluation designs (such as real-time

evaluations, participatory evaluations, external evaluations, process evaluations, economic evaluations, self-evaluations and impact evaluations) and that the most appropriate type of evaluation in any given situation will depend on the context of the intervention, the objectives of the evaluation and the resources available.

This policy is therefore intended to establish a basic set of responsibilities and expectations, while leaving wide latitude on methods and approaches. In addition, CFC recognizes that we have a responsibility to promote processes of mutual learning and capacity-building amongst ourselves and with partners on effective and empowering approaches to evaluation.

Objectives and Strategies

CFC commits to undertake timely, relevant, and credible analyses of the performance of our programs to inform the development of future programs and projects, help us to be accountable for the resources with which we have been entrusted and ensure that we are transparent in our program practice.

Evaluation should consistently:

- improve the quality and impact of what we and our partners and allies do;
- enhance mutual accountability, transparency and learning between the communities, partners and allies with whom we work, ourselves and our donors;
- enhance the ability of those people whom we seek to benefit to create opportunities and means to hold us –and others- to account;
- utilize evaluation methods that are participatory, inclusive, and gender-sensitive;
- use processes and outcomes to influence the practice and accountability of other actors in the development sector, including governments, private sector actors, other INGOs, and civil society organizations; and
- strengthen our credibility as an international non-governmental organization working in development.

Policy Elements

General

1. Ultimate responsibility for compliance with and revision of this policy rests with the CFC Executive Director.
2. Bearing in mind the criteria in point 4 (below), all CFC programs and projects should include a monitoring and evaluation plan. These plans may range from simple top line reviews, to stakeholder reflections or more in-depth assessments. Within the operational plans, details should include a timetable for evaluations consistent with the expectations in this policy and the allocation of budgets for evaluation (including funds for translation as needed).

3. Responsibility for CFC evaluations rests with CFC's Executive Director, who has considerable latitude to decide the need for and focus of an evaluation. Of course, it is necessary to balance the expectation that all programs will have a monitoring and evaluation plan with the reality of time and financial constraints. Therefore, there should be a strong rationale for doing each evaluation, and it should be clear how the findings will be used to improve the quality of our programs. For that reason, CFC encourages evaluations to be undertaken at levels where findings will be most relevant.
4. When making decisions about evaluation priorities, CFC's Executive Director will consider:
 - the overall cost of the program/project;
 - the visibility and/or the risk associated with the program/project;
 - the importance of systematically listening to and including program constituents (taking particular care to remove barriers to the participation of women, marginalized program participants and their communities) in the evaluation process (as appropriate);
 - the need to capture the challenges of transforming gender and power relations;
 - the potential for scale-up, replication or leverage;
 - demands for accountability from stakeholders, including donor requirements in direct financing and co-financing arrangements;
 - the need to supplement or augment existing evaluation and reporting requirements (the majority of funders have specific evaluation requirements which CFC will meet; the CFC Executive Director will determine if additional evaluation processes are needed for those programs or projects); and
 - the need to comply with inter-agency agreements CFC has signed onto (e.g. the CCIC Code of Ethics and operational standards).

In addition, CFC staff should be open and responsive to emerging opportunities and requests for evaluative exercises, particularly requests from the organizations and communities with which we collaborate.

5. In order to ensure that we are accountable for the resources with which we have been entrusted, CFC is firmly committed to the following evaluation frequency:
 - For all programs with a time frame of 5 years or more, CFC will carry out a mid-term and a final, external evaluation at the end of the program.
 - If there are no specific donor requirements for project evaluations, projects with budgets over \$500,000 with a timeframe between 1-3 years will carry out at least one evaluation; the nature of the evaluation (mid-term or final) will be determined by its purpose.
 - Those projects with a timeframe higher than 3 years (at the same budget threshold) will be subject to both a mid-term and final external evaluation.

- All projects, regardless of how small the budget or short the timeframe, will complete a final report that includes a brief evaluation of achievements, challenges, and learnings.

CFC encourages teams to evaluate all programs or projects where there is significant potential for learning, scale up or leverage, no matter the timeframe or budget threshold, especially those that are high-profile, complex, innovative or risky in nature.

6. In the specific case of final evaluations, the process should include an assessment of:

- Progress towards a program's or project's outcomes or impact (Impact);
- the reasons behind the achievement (or not) of objectives (e.g. if a program or project is not achieving objectives, whether the problem rests in the theory of change, or with difficulties in implementation [including the institutional context], and whether these are leading to unintended [positive or negative] consequences) (Effectiveness);
- whether the objectives are ultimately contributing to the realization of CFC's mission (Effectiveness);
- CFC's contribution and value-added (Effectiveness);
- the extent to which the intervention is suited to the priorities and policies of the people and communities it is intended to benefit, with specific reference to the experiences and opinions of women and other marginalized groups (Relevance);
- the degree to which the financial resources of the project or program have been used economically and efficiently (Efficiency); and
- conditions and choices for exiting, scaling up, handover or other types of transitions (Sustainability).

The breadth and depth of any evaluation (including the choice of the criteria to consider in its design) should be commensurate with the size and strategic value of the program and, therefore, will depend on its objectives and the resources available.

7. CFCs evaluation processes (from the terms of reference, through the process of collecting information up to the development and presentation of findings) must reflect our values, including the value placed on primary stakeholder participation, the importance of transforming unequal gender and power relations and the importance of transparency and accountability.
8. Evaluations can be formative or centered on outcomes or longer-term impacts, developmental or retrospective; they can be comprehensive or only consider areas of particular promise or concern. In all cases, evaluations should be focused, strategic and cost-effective. The evaluation process and findings should be outlined in a final report, which should be accompanied by an executive summary; that summary should clearly highlight all the key findings. In both documents, the conclusions should be presented in a way that allows them to be easily understood (including translations as appropriate), owned and acted upon.

9. The commissioning Executive Director is responsible for reviewing the quality of the evaluation process and product(s) and determining that the evaluation has complied with the terms of reference, as well as the ethical and professional standards CFC adheres to. Results, including recommendations, should be shared and processed with primary stakeholders. At a minimum, the quality of the report will be assessed according to its validity, credibility, and usefulness.
10. All evaluation reports must be accompanied by a management response that communicates careful consideration of the evaluation's findings and recommendations, detailed actions that will be taken to respond to these findings and offers an opportunity to comment on the utility of the evaluation process and final report. The Executive Director is responsible for ensuring that a management response is prepared within a reasonably brief period of time after the finalization of the evaluation document or other products.

Transparency

11. To ensure transparency to CFC's constituents, CFC may decide to place the executive summary and management response of evaluations of CFC's projects and programs on <http://www.changeforchildren.org> and/or share them with other donors and stakeholders, barring unacceptable risk or repercussions to staff, partners or program efforts,

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