



Partner Feedback Survey – Keystone Accountability Web Brief Church World Service

Every organization relies on information and signals to stay healthy: whether from the marketplace, the media, the grapevine or even from within itself. Humanitarian and development assistance agencies receive signals from many places, yet rarely do we receive systematic feedback from Southern partners - our closest allies in community and global transformation.

Church World Service is pleased to share assessments from its Southern partners as reported in the *NGO Partner Survey 2010* by Keystone Accountability. The survey gathered dynamic data and perspectives from 1,067 partners, on behalf of 25 INGOs they work with. CWS's partners generally commend the agency's performance, assess our strengths, confront us with critiques, and provide credible benchmarks as we seek to improve our effectiveness, relevance and reliability as a partner.

In a nutshell:

Keystone Partner Surveys collect independent and anonymous feedback from Southern partners to generate improvement-oriented findings for Northern INGOs. A group of INGOs decided to participate in a joint exercise wherein Keystone sent the same questionnaire to all participating INGOs' partners. With the data, Keystone wrote an agency-specific report for each INGO, comparing its performance to sector benchmarks that emerged from the entire process. The comparison allows NGOs to identify specific strengths and areas for improvement. The survey process is designed to be simple, effective and ethical.

Why Church World Service participated:

Because of CWS's attention to medium and long-term strategy, including its strategic plan for 2012-2015 and the agency's 2020 future vision process, soliciting feedback from partners now was deemed very relevant. We also felt that the survey's benchmarking concept as a valid means of planning and marking performance and increased effectiveness was very promising. We wanted to be part of that as early as possible.

Process summary:

The process began in early 2010 with Keystone Accountability and the U.K. INGO membership organizations Bond and NIDOS. A few months later, U.S. INGOs who are members of InterAction joined the planning. In both the U.S. and U.K., the invitation to participate was broadly distributed. A total of 25 agencies (nine from the U.S.) joined the cohort. Five of the U.S. agencies have faith-based core constituencies.

Participating agencies reviewed and revised the questionnaire. Selected agencies also piloted the final version prior to the official survey. In addition to the core questionnaire, each agency could include four questions specifically directed to their partners. Keystone translated the survey into French, Spanish and Portuguese.

Keystone conducted the survey from August – September 2010. By December, each participating agency received a confidential report about its performance. Keystone released a public report on 12 January 2011 with results for the entire cohort of agencies. This report is on its website. The public report may be translated.

With the reports in hand, participating agencies should now discuss and verify the findings with their partners in order to identify and implement specific organizational improvements.

CWS Details:

CWS submitted the names of 49 partners for this survey and 24 responded – a response rate of 49%, which was well above the cohort average. We did not include any partners from the North America region. Excluding the North America region, CWS participates in approximately 120 partnering relationships of the sort that could generate meaningful responses to the feedback survey.

Some of these partners had recently experienced budget cuts resulting from CWS's financial challenges and so we expected that they might have been inclined to be extra harsh with us. All but one agency requested a copy of the public report.