

ADRA International

**INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT  
AFP-A-00-04-00013-00**

2004-2008

MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT

PREPARED BY

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## LIST OF ACRONYMNS

ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APLI	Adventist Professional Leadership Institute
BCI	Behavior Change Initiative
CARE	U.S. PVO
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DAP	Development Activity Program
DIP	Detailed Implementation Plan
FANTA	Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEWS	Famine Early Warning System
FFP	Food For Peace
FFW	Food For Work
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Resources
HQ	ADRA International Headquarters
ICB	Institutional Capacity Building
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IR	Intermediate Result
ISA	Institutional Support Assistance
MCHN	Maternal-Child Health Nutrition
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MIS	Management Information Systems
MTIE	Monitoring, Targeting, Impact Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PLWHA	Persons Living With HIV/AIDS
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
RH/FP	Reproductive Health/Family Planning
SCF	Save the Children Federation
SAWS	Seventh-day Adventist Welfare Services
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound
SO	Strategic Objective
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
WHO	World Health Organization

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I wish to thank ADRA for the opportunity to contribute to their activity in strengthening their programs through this mid-term evaluation report. The collaboration provided by Mr. Dawit Habtemariam, ADRA/International Assistant Director for Evaluation greatly facilitated my work, and was highly appreciated. I would also like to thank staff in the ADRA/International offices in Silver Spring, Maryland, who took time from their very busy schedules to meet with me and discuss the program. Mr. Rudy Monsalve, ADRA Food Security Director, ensured that I was able to obtain the information needed for this report and discussed various points of special interest during the course of the evaluation. Mr. Darcy Leon, ADRA/Mozambique Country Director, and Mr. Rudy Enriquez, ADRA/Mozambique Title II Program Director provided insight from the field perspective.

Although this report benefited from a wide range of sources that provided the input, I alone am responsible for the direction, level, and content of the analysis. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report are my own, and do not reflect those of ADRA or any person or institution cited or mentioned therein.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2004, the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) entered into a cooperative agreement with USAID to provide funding for the funded Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) project. The estimated completion time for the project is September 30, 2008. The goal of the ICB grant is to increase ADRA's capacity to reduce the risk of food insecurity through food-assisted programs. ADRA has identified three strategic objectives, and accompanying intermediate results, that will contribute to achieving this overarching goal:

- SO 1:** Increased use of best practices that reduce vulnerable populations' risk of food insecurity.
- SO 2:** Increased collaboration within and outside the ADRA network.
- SO 3:** Timely and efficient food security management systems in both headquarters and field offices.

The mid-term evaluation was carried out to provide ADRA and USAID with useful information to enable informed decisions about this grant's progress and future direction. Overall, the evaluation found that ADRA has been successful at achieving its targets for developing the materials and programs to achieve the three Strategic Objectives. However, the evaluation also concludes that ADRA faces significant challenges in implementing these initiatives over the remaining life of the project.

A draft version of, "Community Development Best Practice Guidelines – Shaping the Future of International Development", was completed in May 2006, and has been distributed within ADRA International for feedback to further refine this draft. Although there is a wealth of information on how to identify and document best practices, there is an absence of documented success in applying the best practices approach to actual projects. Nor is there the use of best practices actually improved implementation or impact.

Identifying "best practices" requires rigorous analyses, so ADRA might be well served by forming an alliance with a university or universities to facilitate the process – perhaps by offering a research assistantship or internship at the graduate level. Also, because of the long-term and continuing aspect of "best practices", a strong commitment by ADRA management may be necessary.

ADRA has made progress in achieving integration among its technical areas of specialization, but much remains to be done. For example, food security is still seen as a separate technical specialty, rather than as a logical and desired outcome of economic growth and health/nutrition programs. If not integrated around a broader concept, the individual specialties see themselves as more of an end in themselves.

ADRA's policy is to work with local officials and communities, and often the first action taken by these groups is identifying local priority needs within the community. However, restrictions imposed by the funding entity, ADRA's technical expertise, and reluctance to work with certain key groups may limit its ability to meet local needs. Working with local government officials is also a standard practice for ADRA. But differences between the

government's and the donor's priorities can limit the collaboration. Finally, a recent change in awarding of Title II resources on a competitive process will limit collaboration among PVOs. The obvious gains that can be realized by having PVOs work together may never occur because of the need to guard one's competitive advantage.

ADRA needs to review the structure and participation of program committees to ensure all relevant technical expertise is brought to bear on program design and implementation, and it has the requisite staff expertise, either full time or accessible via short-term contracts. Closer collaboration at the local level may reside with government officials at the local level, at the highest levels, or at several or all levels in between, and may require intercession by donor officials.

ADRA has made major strides in improving its management information system, both in the headquarters and field offices. ADRA has also begun a long-overdue upgrade to its basic accounting system. The new system, Nuvision, is a database system, which provides an effective audit trail. The accounting system has several modules, so ADRA can purchase only those most relevant to its needs. Also, this new system is a broader financial management program than the more narrowly-focused accounting system. It provides information to non-financial managerial staff that can improve program implementation and impact. Finally, ADRA is working on a new commodity management system. Complicating the implementation of a more effective commodity management system is donor demands to meet the particular needs of the donor office. These systems do not necessarily improve the overall program management, including commodity management.

ADRA should give the highest priority to implementing the new financial system as rapidly as possible. However, the commodity management program has one important shortfall, and that is its inability to include commodity cost. Should ADRA decide to upgrade its commodity management to include access to both volume and price data, the recommended approach would be to begin talking with the company that is providing the financial management software to see if that program could be modified or if a template could be provided that would integrate this into the current program. ADRA also needs to begin an immediate dialogue with USAID to resolve the question of multiple commodity management systems.

Several of ADRA staff members interviewed remarked that they believed the next important step in strengthening the M&E system would be via developing standard indicators. The set of eight goals identified for the Millennium Development that have been adopted by most donor countries and international agencies may not fully describe what the USG wants to measure in programs that it finances. But ADRA, as with other PVOs, must include these in its list, as they must be used for reporting on programs financed by other donors. ADRA needs to continue working with USAID/W, USAID Missions, FANTA, PVOs, and other donors to further refine a group of indicators that can be used across countries and technical areas to measure program impact. The pool of possible indicators should be broadened to include those used by research institutions and universities to measure the change observed in their programs and projects.

Interviews at ADRA/International clearly showed that the staff members were fully occupied. In fact, most interviewees reported that they were unable to provide the level of support to the field offices that they wanted due to the current workload demands. This has implications for the remainder of the ICB grant, as it enters the implementation phase. And it can be concluded that the personnel constraint will be the main factor limiting ADRA's ability to actually achieve its stated Strategic Objectives. ADRA may be able to meet this demand on staff time by hiring short-term personnel. But without additional staff, fully realizing the improvements envisioned in the ICB do not seem possible.

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## **1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

This Institutional Capacity Building Grant (FY 2004-2008) builds upon the previous Institutional Strengthening Activity (ISA) awarded to ADRA in FY 1999. The ISA was designed to improve ADRA's technical and administrative capacity to design, implement, and monitor its Title II programs. The mid-term evaluation determined that a majority of the goals for the grant were achieved, particularly in commodity management, human resources, and in establishing a data base for disseminating information between staff at HQ and in the field. ADRA believes that its ICB can improve its capacity to capture and institutionalize its best practices and lessons learned, and thereby make a significant contribution to the broader Title II PVO community about effective strategies in food aid, while further strengthening management of its own programs. Because the actual ICB grant did not begin until late in FY 2004, this mid-term evaluation is essentially looking at two years of implementation.

### **1.1 Project Goal And Objectives**

The goal of ADRA's USAID/FFP-funded Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) grant is to increase ADRA's capacity to reduce the risk of food insecurity through food-assisted programs worldwide. This goal is to be achieved through the following strategic objectives:

**SO 1:** Increased use of best practices that reduce vulnerable populations' risk of food insecurity.

**IR 1.1:** Institutionalize best practices and increase organizational capacity in programs that reduce population's vulnerability to food insecurity.

**IR 1.2:** Develop innovative HIV/AIDS strategies based on the CBFS framework that addresses food insecurity among people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and those affected by the virus.

**SO 2:** Increased collaboration within and outside the ADRA network.

**IR 2.1:** Increased collaboration between ADRA technical portfolios and the broader network.

**IR 2.2:** Increased collaboration and coordination amongst civil society and local government in Title II targeted communities.

**IR 2.3:** Increased collaboration with other PVOs and groups involved in food security.

**SO 3:** Timely and efficient food security management systems in both headquarters and field offices.

**IR 3.1:** Improved FS Management Information Systems for timely and efficient decision-making.

**IR 3.2:** Improved accounting and inventory and logistics management

## **1.2 Purpose Of The Mid-Term Evaluation**

The mid-term evaluation will provide ADRA and financing agency with useful information to enable informed decisions about this grant's progress and future direction. Specifically, it will:

- Determine progress the program has made toward reaching its targets;
- Refine the program's targets if needed;
- Review the appropriateness of the program's activity;
- Identify the program's constraints and difficulties plus successes; and
- Make recommendations to improve the program performance, or, as appropriate, suggest modifications or discontinuance of activities.

## **1.3 Methodology**

The methodology includes the following:

- *Review Literature* – The evaluator received copies of the scope of work (SOW) and selected relevant document prior to commencing the evaluation. The SOW (Appendix C) provided a general overview of the ICB, as well as suggested methodology and report format. Other documents reviewed were: the original grant proposal, the ICB Annual Performance Reports for FY 2004 and FY 2005, the ICB Workplan for FY 2006, the draft Best Practices Guidelines, and various unofficial financial and programmatic papers.
- *Interviews* - Interview officials involved with Title II at USAID/Washington, ADRA/HQ, USAID Missions, ADRA field offices, other donor organizations, and private agencies, as required.

## **1.4 Composition Of The Evaluation Team**

The Evaluation Team consisted of Mr. Darell McIntyre, (Independent External Consultant) and Mr. Dawit Habtemariam, Assistant Director of Evaluation ADRA International.

## **2 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Overall, ADRA has been successful at achieving its targets for developing the materials and programs to achieve the three Strategic Objectives. Programmatic findings and recommendations are presented in greater detail in subsequent sections of the report. Including the ICB Work Plan for FY 2006 (Appendix C) is important, because it gives an actual status report of the various activities. For example, if a particular workshop was planned to present the new commodity tracking program, then this indicates that the program was actually developed.

The following are a list of the major ICB achievements to date, as seen by ADRA staff:

- Best Practices tool documentation developed and workshop held.

- Strengthened cross portfolio collaboration among the various bureaus within ADRA
- ADRA's Health Unit now supports all HIV/AIDS issues for all food security programs.
- Increased coordination between Disaster Response Management and Food Security units.
- New Title II proposals show greater collaboration with local authorities.
- New staff hired: Two Desk Officers, M&E specialists, Monetization & Commodity Officer, and additional positions in Program Management and M&E approved.
- Finance & auditing manual developed.
- Alchemy Information Management Database System installed permitting greater access to information of past and present ADRA programs.
- Standardized trip reporting system established.
- Standards for operational procedures for food security program administration and implementation developed and disseminated to field offices.
- Commodity Tracking System completed and all country offices now reporting all CSRs and RSRs on CTS format.
- New financial management software ready for field implementation (Madagascar will be first country.).

## **2.1 ICB Design and Implementation**

### **2.1.1 Increased use of best practices that reduce vulnerable populations risk of food insecurity.**

#### **2.1.1.1 Findings**

First, ADRA is to be commended for undertaking an activity that is incredibly complex, requires a very intensive and continuing level of effort, and is often laden with frustration. ADRA has made progress at developing a systematic approach to identifying best practices. A draft version of the approach entitled, "Community Development Best Practice Guidelines -- Shaping the Future of International Development", was completed in May 2006 (Appendix B). This document has been distributed within ADRA International, and feedback is being obtained to further refine this draft. As the document is still in the development stage, no analysis is possible regarding its application and effectiveness.

The "Best Practices" methodology is known and applied across many private sector enterprises, and is seen as an important step in improving the performance of many non-governmental organizations. Several NGOs are actively recruiting specialists, as is evidenced by advertisements on their respective websites. A quick search of the internet reveals considerable documentation is available on identifying best practices. And those within ADRA who were interviewed for this evaluation understood its importance in program design and implementation.

#### **2.1.1.2 Recommendations**

Although there is a wealth of information on how to identify and document best practices, the evaluation revealed a noticeable absence of documented success in

applying the best practices approach to actual projects nor the use of best practices actually improved implementation or impact.

This illustrates the fundamental difficulty associated with the practical application of what seems to everyone as a logical good idea. The environment is fraught with complexities, including cultural, economic, physical, anthropological, etc., that all interact and influence success or failure. A suggested starting point for ADRA could be to look at its basic precepts. For example, ADRA posits constructive change on the ability to form effective working groups. This approach is found in all of their programs, economic growth, nutrition, health, education. Therefore, developing guidelines for successfully forming effective groups could logically be seen as a topic where using a “best practice” would greatly enhance program impact in whatever technical area or areas are chosen. Using the other extreme, trying to analyze successful projects may be too broad to allow for identifying best practices because situational factors may conceal key elements.

By their very nature, identifying “best practices” requires rigorous analyses. ADRA might be well-served by forming an alliance with a university or universities to facilitate the process. One option would be to offer a research assistantship or internship at the graduate level. Selecting candidates would be a key element, as not everyone is up to the challenge of doing research in the context of the developing world. But the alliance could also benefit the educational institution by broadening the dialogue and understanding of what factors are critical for successful development to occur. Participating in the global economy requires comprehensive growth in a wide range of sectors in the developing world, and understanding the basics behind that growth is crucial.

Finally, because of the long-term and continuing aspect of “best practices”, a strong commitment by ADRA management will be necessary. Results will not be evident in the short term, so staying the course will be essential. Otherwise, it could easily end as so many other good ideas have ended, that is having a tangential relationship to the mainstream, rather than being an integral part of the mainstream.

## **2.1.2 Increased collaboration within and outside the ADRA network**

### **2.1.2.1 Findings**

ADRA has made progress in achieving integration among its technical areas of specialization. But much remains to be done. For example, food security is still seen as a separate technical specialty, rather than as a logical and desired outcome of economic growth and health/nutrition programs. Agricultural production and marketing, rural micro and small enterprise development, and micro credit systems are all economic development interventions, and all should result in improved food security. Mother and child health, HIV/AIDS, child survival, and sanitation are all interventions that, likewise, lead to improved food security. If not integrating around a broader concept, the individual specialties may see themselves as more of an end in themselves. For example, a group implementing a child survival grant may not see themselves as critical participants in a Title II program, even though child survival is a

major component of that program. Likewise, the micro-credit group may not participate in a Title II program because they see their end point as a functioning micro credit system, and not the bigger issue of why financial services are necessary for improving household food security, and how can they assist economic growth using Title II resources.

ADRA's policy is strongly oriented toward working with local officials and communities. As noted in section 2.1.1 above, ADRA bases its programs on initially forming community groups. And for the most part, the first action taken by these groups is identifying local priority needs within the community. Perhaps the greatest constraint to this is the restriction imposed by the funding entity. For example, a community may identify access to potable water as its greatest need, but ADRA's grant may preclude using funds for this purpose because it is targeting another activity for example growth monitoring.

Within ADRA, technical expertise may limit its ability to meet local needs. An example of this is that a community may identify marketing as its greatest need, but ADRA's staff may not include this proficiency. They may, therefore, be inclined to work on production, because they do have technical staff with this capability. Also, a reluctance to work with the key private sector agents may also inhibit a closer union between the community's expressed need and the ADRA program interventions.

Working with local government officials is also a standard procedure for ADRA. And, for the most part, this has been possible. The most common factor that has limited collaboration has been a result of aspects beyond ADRA's control. In some instances the issue has been between the local government's focus versus the donor's. ADRA then is caught in the middle, without the ability to resolve the issue.

Finally, a recent change in the nature of the Title II program is not particularly conducive to open interchange of information among Title II cooperating sponsors – one of the Strategic Objectives of the ICB grant. The change has been to base the awarding of Title II development resources on a competitive process. The concept and importance of proprietary information is well understood among private sector firms as the basis for the competitive advantage that wins the contest for resources or market share. The obvious gains that can be realized by having PVOs work together may never occur because of the need to guard one's competitive advantage. These gains have been evident as the result of relationships that have become more collegial and less competitive over the recent past. This change in the environment will make successfully achieving SO 2 more difficult.

#### 2.1.2.2 Recommendations

ADRA needs to review the structure and participation of program committees to ensure a central focus and that all relevant technical expertise is brought to bear on program design and implementation. They must also ensure that ADRA/International has the requisite staff expertise, either full time or accessible via short-term contracts. This also

applies to field offices. For example, agricultural-based economic growth will require expertise in marketing and economics, not just in production agronomy.

The solution to closer collaboration at the local level may reside with government officials at the local level, at the highest levels, or at several or all levels in between. Some of these will be within ADRA's manageable interest to resolve, but some will require intercession by other U.S. Government or other donor officials. The obvious conclusion is that ADRA must also work closely with the donor, and engage in an open and frank dialogue about policy as well as technical issues.

Overall, this S.O. would seem to be a logical complement of SO 1: "Best Practices". And it is recommended that it be considered as another key element in ADRA's programs that should be analyzed in that context. Its importance is likely to be equivalent to the role of formation of effective groups.

### **2.1.3 Timely and efficient food security management systems in both headquarters and field offices**

#### **2.1.3.1 Findings**

ADRA has made major strides in improving its management information system, both in the headquarters and field offices. The headquarters capacity was temporarily reduced when a key staff member with monitoring and evaluation responsibilities resigned to take another job outside of ADRA. However, after some delay, this position has been filled with a very qualified professional, and the program of regular evaluations is moving forward. At the field level, the role of M&E has been upgraded with the hiring of key personnel that has increased the emphasis on and quality of program monitoring.

ADRA has begun a long-overdue upgrade to its basic accounting system. The current system is an in-house design that has severe limitations. These include both its inability to provide adequate information on strictly financial transactions, as well as providing non-financial staff with an important management tool. Often, reports that are sent from the field to the central office require manual data entry before the financial information they contain can be used by ADRA International staff. Also, because the information is not available on-line, significant delays in getting current financial data can result.

The new system, Nuvision, has several features to overcome the shortcomings of the current system. One of the most significant is that it is a database system, which provides an effective audit trail. The accounting system has several modules, and ADRA purchases those most relevant to its needs. And because it is licensed from an external provider, assistance with special needs is readily available. Therefore the cost of the system is more than offset by the benefits.

Also, this new system is more of a financial management program, rather than the more narrowly-focused accounting system. The distinction is significant, because it can provide information to non-financial managerial staff that can improve program implementation and impact. Taking advantage of this benefit may require some additional training of the managerial staff in how to utilize what is available. For

example, trends in disbursements may have little meaning for the accountant, but are of major importance to the manager for what they reveal about implementation.

ADRA is also working on a new commodity management system. Although, in most instances, commodity management has functioned quite well in the field, there is room for improvement in the total chain from preparing AERs on a timely basis to final delivery to the ultimate consumer. ADRA's approach is to make this system more responsive and capable of providing more timely information. Development of the system is on track, but as with the financial management system, it is too early to actually see or measure improvements related to implementing the new system.

The commodity management program has one important shortfall, and that is its inability to include commodity cost. Therefore, it is essentially an accounting program that simply replaces numbers denominated in cash with in-kind denominations of bags, cans, kilograms, liters, etc. And while the newly designed program will improve the overall commodity tracking process, by not having the information on volume available with its corresponding value limits the system's value as a management tool.

Complicating the ability to implement a more streamlined and effective commodity management system is the need to meet the demands of donors that have their own systems that are specific to their needs. For example, the Africa regional office has a commodity system that it requires all cooperating sponsors to use. This system may meet some particular needs of that office, but it is not a system that necessarily improves the overall program management, including commodity management.

#### 2.1.3.2 Recommendations

ADRA should give the highest priority to implementing the new financial system as rapidly as possible. This will require a significantly higher level of effort initially, but as it takes hold, that level should drop to at least the prior level. However, the gains in terms of an improved management tool will make the initial investment minor in comparison.

Should ADRA decide to upgrade its commodity management to include access to both volume and price data, the recommended approach would be to begin talking with the company that is providing the financial management software to see if that program could be modified or if a template could be provided that would integrate this into the current program. An additional benefit could be a more streamlined program administration by having managers work with only one program.

ADRA should immediately begin talking with the company that is providing the financial management software to see if the program could be modified or if a template could be provided that would integrate the entire system. An additional benefit could be a more streamlined program administration.

ADRA needs to begin an immediate dialogue with USAID to resolve the question of multiple commodity management systems. Both parties have legitimate needs – USAID's management oversight, and ADRA's ultimate legal responsibility for the proper use of Title II commodities as the owner of those commodities.

## **3 PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

### **3.1 Monitoring and Evaluation**

#### **3.1.1 Findings**

As noted in section 2.1.3 above, ADRA has strengthened its capacity in M&E through additional technical staff. Several of the ADRA staff interviewed remarked that they believed the next important step in strengthening the M&E system would be via developing standard indicators. Some areas, such as child survival, have a relative longer time of developing and refining indicators, so there is much more agreement across donors, PVOs, and governments as to what constitute a valid set of indicators. Developing indicators for other areas, such as household economic growth, have shorter histories. And the subject areas are more complex and often very expensive to measure directly. Therefore, the practical solution has been to search for proxies that strongly correlate with the desired action.

The set of eight goals identified for the Millennium Development that have been adopted by most donor countries and international agencies may not fully describe what the USG wants to measure in programs that it finances. But ADRA, as with other PVOs, must include these in its list, as they must be used for reporting on programs financed by other donors. And many of these donors want the impact of other-donor resources reported under these goals.

#### **3.1.2 Recommendations**

ADRA needs to continue working with USAID/W, USAID Missions, FANTA, PVOs, and other donors to further refine a group of indicators that can be used across countries and technical areas to measure program impact. The challenge will be to get agreement on acceptable indicators, rather than anyone's "perfect" indicator. The pool of possible indicators should be broadened to include those used by research institutions and universities to measure the change observed in their programs and projects.

### **3.2 Program Staff**

#### **3.2.1 Findings**

Interviews at ADRA/International clearly showed that the staff was fully occupied. In fact, most interviewees reported that they were unable to provide the level of support to the field offices that they wanted due to the current workload demands. This has implications for the remainder of the ICB grant, as it enters the implementation phase. And it can be concluded that the personnel constraint will be the main factor limiting ADRA's ability to actually achieve its stated Strategic Objectives.

#### **3.2.2 Recommendations**

Implementing change always involves an initial increase in level of effort as selected staff is assigned teaching responsibilities in addition to their normal workload. The second factor is usually associated with the learning curve that lasts until the newly trained employees are fully cognizant of the new software, the changed way of thinking, etc. This is a transitional drop in productivity that is usually more than compensated for once the greater productivity inherent in the change becomes possible. ADRA may be able to meet this demand on staff time by hiring short-term personnel. But without additional staff, fully realizing the improvements envisioned in the ICB do not seem possible.

## **APPENDIX A: KEY PERSONS INTERVIEWED**

### **ADRA/International:**

Mr. Seth Abu-Bonsrah, Assistant Director for Monitoring and Evaluation  
Mr. Edward Baber , Associate Director, Finance Compliance Sector  
Mr. Robert Cook, Director, Financial Compliance Sector  
Mr. Kenneth Flemmer, Chief, Internal Control and Compliance  
Mr. Dawit Habtemariam, Assistant Director for Evaluation  
Mr. Ken Harvey, Senior Financial Compliance Administrator  
Ms. Rachel Lambeth, Grant Administration Desk Officer  
Mr. Milton McHenry, Assoc. Director for Food Security  
Mr. Nestor Mogollon, Assoc. Director for M&E  
Mr. Rudy Monsalve, Director for Food Security  
Mr. Rami Nashed, Senior Grant Accountant  
Ms. Jennifer Schmidt, Chief, Planning  
Mr. Anthony Stahl, Chief, PMB  
Ms. Mabel Valdivia, Associate Director for Planning  
Mr. Solomon Wako, Director for Evaluation  
Ms. Anne Woodworth, Assistant Director for Planning  
Mr. Daniel Wortman, Assistant Director for Food Security

### **ADRA/Mozambique**

Mr. Darcy Leon, Country Representative  
Mr. Rudy Enriquez, Title II Program Director

**APPENDIX B: DRAFT BEST PRACTICES GUIDELINES**

**Community Development Best Practice Guidelines**

*Shaping the Future of International Development*

Prepared by  
**Rudi Maier**  
Andrews University

**ADVENTIST DEVELOPMENT AND RELIEF AGENCY International**  
(5-25-06)

**“The true engine of today’s organization is the brainpower of its employees.”**

*—The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Knowledge Management*

**“I now see that knowledge is a resource, and just as you manage resources like funding, people and time, we must find a way to manage our knowledge to get the most from it.”**

*—Aurelio Mavone, Mozambique*

**“The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and over and over again, but expecting a different result.”**

*—Albert Einstein*

## Introduction

ADRA International wants to create a knowledge base of development lessons learned in many of its development interventions worldwide. It wants to develop a mechanism which will connect development practitioners with each other to allow them to share their knowledge to “work smarter” in concert with each other to accomplish ADRA’s overall mission. The development discipline is rapidly changing, and with it policies and strategies require rapid access to information and experiences to be used for informed decisions and actions.

ADRA is faced with unprecedented opportunities to play a visible and influential role because of its rich international development experience. The agency is working all over the world in some of the most remote and impoverished countries in the world. Its people work worldwide, generating knowledge and requiring timely information wherever they are. Often reports are generated and can be found in various databases. This knowledge sometimes gets lost, especially as people move from one post to another within the organization or as someone retires. To capture and tap into this vast ADRA knowledge and development experience amassed as a member of the international development community and to share this knowledge with others is so important for continued success. We need to be equipped to draw on and learn from our expertise, capabilities, and network in order to respond quickly in today’s complex and fast-moving environment.

The following project is designed to collect “Best Practices” and share it with the rest of the agency as well as the rest of the development community. It is ADRA’s effort to link “what we do” (and hopefully do best), with “what we need to know” (to do better) in other parts of the world. Like never before, the ADRA network is faced with an unprecedented opportunity to collaborate and to play a visible and influential role in pooling its knowledge resources to confront the new and complex challenges of today’s fragile world.

To meet these challenges—is to capitalize on its knowledge, and become more effective players in the development arena—ADRA must overcome certain internal organizational constraints:

- Counteracting the depletion of knowledge as its human capital either retires or moves to different employments (because funding for certain projects and activities cease).
- Sharing gained knowledge across organizational boundaries—throughout the ADRA network.
- Establishing a mechanism and a place where volumes of data and information can be collected and stored not only for the daily conduct of its work (in a given area) but also for future projects (in other parts of the world and by other entities of the network).

By establishing a Best Practice data bank, ADRA will establish a cost-effective process of continuous learning for the whole network. Since everyone in the network will have access to the information (and the lessons learned by someone else), certain new ADRA projects will not have to “reinvent the wheel.” This knowledge-sharing is important for it will increase staff efficiency and effectiveness because it has access to a variety of techniques.

An expertise directory (it can be web-accessible as an intra- or extranet, or any other form which ADRA might need to determine) will then allow this knowledge to be shared. It will contribute to identify development and operational expertise quickly across the ADRA network (and thereby allow development challenges to be addressed more efficiently).

Contributors to the Best Practice data base will form a community of practitioners who have an interest in supporting each other with the knowledge and expertise needed to perform their job more effectively. The implications of this can become manifold: improved knowledge sharing, more rapid problem resolutions, improved mentoring, better introduction of new employees to the work of ADRA, and the broadening of personal networks to an agency-wide community. This in turn will improve employee morale and retention, thereby enhancing the social capital of the agency.

The following guidelines in how to develop and report on Best Practices will help in the establishment of a unified ADRA knowledge system with standardized categories and classifications which will help in the search and retrieval process of information and knowledge.

## **Successful Projects**

### *Related to Poverty and Community Development*

Poverty and social exclusion are a major challenge for humanity. According to the *Human Development Report*, a quarter of the world's population remains in severe poverty, despite the major advances in reducing poverty made during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, social inequality, marginalization and discrimination still exclude many people from full participation in economic, political and cultural life. While poverty and social exclusion represent common problems to policy makers in both poor and rich countries, new initiatives have been developed to combat these problems, initiatives which merit being called "Best Practices."

### **1. What are Best Practices?**

There is no universally accepted definition of a "best practice." The terms "best practice" and "lessons learned" are often used interchangeably. Lessons learned are usually best approaches and practices that have not been evaluated as rigorously as best practices, but that still offer ideas of what works best in a given situation. They can also be examples of how *not* to do something. Also, lessons are often "lessons from" a specific program or project and are not universal in scope or application. The term best practice is commonly used in the fields of business management, software engineering, and medicine, and increasingly in government.

#### **• Business Management**

In business management, a best practice is a generally accepted "best way of doing a thing." A best practice is formulated after the study of specific business or organizational case studies to determine the most broadly effective and efficient means of organizing a system or performing a function. Best practices are disseminated through academic studies, popular business management books and through "comparison of notes" between corporations.

The idea behind best practices is to create a specification for what the best methodology is for any given situation. One can then compare job performance to these best practices and determine if either the job performance was lacking in quality somehow or if the specification for best practices needs updating to include the job performance being graded.

The management movement of best practices might imply that many if not most situations are repeatable and that if we can sufficiently distill a set of experiences, we can predict all or most of the possible scenarios and the way to handle them best. There is some momentum behind "good practice" as a preferred term since it does not imply that no further innovation or revision is required.

#### **• Software Engineering**

In software engineering the term is used similarly to business management, meaning a set of guidelines or recommendations for doing something. Best practices for programming might include using a consistent coding style and documentation code as soon as it is written. Some processes have been developed to enforce these practices; extreme programming is one example. The term "best current practice" often represents the meaning in a more accurate way, showing the possibility for future developments of "better practice."

#### **• Medicine**

In medicine, best practice refers to a specific treatment for a disease that has been judged optimal after weighing the available outcome evidence. The term began to appear in medical, nursing, and hospital administration literature in the early 1990s, likely borrowed from business management as described previously. In its early usage, it was often applied to administrative aspects of hospital and medical

practice. However, by the late 1990s, "best practice" became particularly associated with the terminology of evidence-based medicine and is primarily used in that context currently. Several medical journals have adopted it as part of their titles.

The term has now been used among governments as well as non-government development agencies. Extensive literature is available in which "best practices" are being described and promoted.

- **Government**

In government there is special interest in best practice exchange, as unlike commercial enterprises there is no competitive incentive to keep best practices secret. The most visible and active exchange efforts focus mostly on public management. Some focus on very detailed procedures and operational processes required to manage sustainable municipal infrastructure.

- **United Nations Population Fund**

The UNFPA Glossary of Monitoring and Evaluation Terms defines best practices as planning or operational practices that have proven successful in particular circumstances and which are "used to demonstrate what works and what does not and to accumulate and apply knowledge about how and why they work in different situations and contexts."

- **UNESCO**

UNESCO describes best practices as having four common characteristics: they are innovative; they make a difference; they have a sustainable effect; and they have the potential to be replicated and to serve as a model for generating initiatives elsewhere.

- **Advance Africa**

Advance Africa, which is funded by USAID to collect and share best practices, states: "A best practice is a specific action or set of actions exhibiting quantitative and qualitative evidence of success together with the ability to be replicated and the potential to be adapted and transferred. Best practices represent the "Gold Standard" of activities and tools that can be implemented to support program objectives." Two criteria are used to assess Best Practices: (1) evidence of success and (2) transferability.

- **UNAIDS**

According to UNAIDS the criteria for assessing whether an approach, strategy or program qualifies as a best practice in the context of HIV/AIDS are effectiveness, ethical soundness, relevance, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, and sustainability. (1) *Effectiveness* is an activity's overall success in producing its desired outcomes and reaching its overall objectives. (2) An *ethical* practice is one that follows or does not break principles of social and professional conduct. (3) *Relevance* is about how closely a practice is focused on the HIV/AIDS response in the context of the society in which it is implemented. (4) *Efficiency* is the capacity to produce desired results with a minimum expenditure of energy, time, or resources. (4) *Sustainability* is the ability of a program or project to continue, and to continue being effective, over the medium to long term.

- **UN Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality**

The UN Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality, in developing its collection of practices on gender, chose to define "good practices" rather than "best practices." A good practice is one that meets at least two of the following criteria: (1) leads to an actual change, (2) has an impact on the policy environment, (3) demonstrates an innovative or replicable approach, or (4) demonstrates sustainability.

- **United States Agency for International Development**

In addition to best practice descriptions, USAID is promoting the "knowledge for development" concept (KfD), which is intended to be "part of an effective strategy that will help generate, capture and disseminate knowledge and information that is relevant to the organization's mission." The essence of this strategy is "getting the right knowledge to the right people at the right time."

## 2. Defining Best Practices in ADRA

ADRA as an agency needs to develop in the future its own definition of “Best Practice.” It is at this stage being suggested that to be considered a “Best Practice” in the ADRA write-up and data base, a practice/program (1) must include substantial evidence that it has had an impact and/or has successfully met its program objectives, and (2) must show evidence that it has been transferred to or replicated in various settings. If no evidence of replication can be provided, the report must show that it has the *potential* to be transferred to other settings. A clear distinction has to be made between untested interventions (*promising practices*) and those with more experience and evidence behind them (with high *confidence level* of evidence of success and *transferability* behind them). (See **Attachment 1: Sample of Best Practice Outline for Projects**).

In addition to projects and/or programs being considered for Best Practices, ADRA would like to broaden its concept and include **good methodologies/procedures** as well as successful and **innovative technologies** in its “Best Practice” documentations. In some of these wider cases, the Best Practice documentations will **only include part of a larger development intervention** (which has been determined to be unique and worth documenting). (See **Attachment 2: Sample of Best Practice Outline for Procedures and Innovative Technologies**).

### **3. Criteria for Designating Activities as Best Practices**

Calling activities “Best Practices” is to suggest that they can and should be replicated, that ideas can and should be generated from them, and that they can and should contribute to policy development. The following four characteristics are common to most Best Practices related to poverty and social exclusion:

- **Best Practices are innovative.** A Best Practice has developed new and creative solutions to common problems of poverty and social exclusion.
- **Best Practices make a difference.** A Best Practice demonstrates a positive and tangible impact on the living conditions, quality of life or environment of the individuals, groups or communities concerned.
- **Best Practices have a sustainable effect.** A Best Practice contributes to sustained eradication of poverty or social exclusion, especially by the involvement of participants.
- **Best Practices have the potential for replication.** A Best Practice serves as a model for generating policies and initiatives elsewhere.

It is essential that, to qualify as Best Practices, the activities in question be **evaluated** in terms of some of the above criteria by both experts and the people concerned. To function as a model for replication, however, it is imperative that information about the activities be easily accessible.

### **4. Process of Designating Projects for Best Practice Documentation**

In order to be designated for Best Practice documentation:

- an external evaluation has to agree that the activities meet the above criteria; or
- an external funder has to indicate that the project has exceeded their expectations and they would like to see that the activities are documented so that other projects can build on the success of their earlier funding.
- No project can be designated for Best Practice documentation and be included in the ADRA Best Practice database if no prior external evaluation has taken place.

In order to be beneficial and comprehensive:

- a coherent interagency and multi-partner effort has to be made at global, regional and country levels to identify, develop and disseminate Best Practice documentation;
- a participatory approach is required to identify gaps in key policy and program areas where a Best Practice Collection can make a contribution;
- dissemination of Best Practice documentation (electronically and in hard copy), in cooperation with initiating partners, users and other interested parties, needs to taken place to enhance impact.

# Guidelines for Documenting Best Practices

## 1. An ADRA Best Practice Database

The idea of a Best Practice database is based on the observation that carefully documented case histories can provide excellent guidelines for policy making and planning of new projects. The goal of a database on Best Practices is to present and promote creative, successful and sustainable solutions to social problems arising from poverty and social exclusion in order to build a bridge between empirical solutions, research and policy.

The **purpose of a Best Practice database** is to provide first references to one who is involved in planning either a next round of activities or to get insights into how to start a new project under similar circumstances. Under those circumstances a Best Practice database:

- is a collection of ADRA information materials that promote learning, experience sharing and empowerment of stakeholders and partners (village people, affected communities, civil society, governments, the private sector, donors and international organizations) engaged in and responding to the social and community needs and managing its overall impact;
- provides a voice to those working to combat poverty and mitigate its effects;
- provides information about what has worked in specific settings for the benefit of others facing similar challenges;
- fills a gap in key policy and programmatic areas by providing technical and strategic guidance as well as state-of-the-art knowledge on prevention, care and impact-alleviation in multiple settings;
- aims to stimulate new initiatives in the interest of scaling up country-level responses to the development needs globally; and
- is an ADRA-led inter-agency effort in partnership with its global partners who are responding to make an impact worldwide.

Ideally, the Best Practice Collection will use case studies that compare a variety of approaches and contexts that will enrich learning for others.

Best Practices, are model projects/activities or policies aimed at improving the quality of life of individuals or groups suffering from poverty or social exclusion. They are typically based on the cooperation between national or local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities, the private sector, and academic communities. They include a variety of activities in all parts of the world.

## 2. Nature of the Documentation

Projects are by nature adapted to the local context, therefore following the blueprint of someone else's project usually does not work. But projects do often generate practices, experiences or lessons that are potentially applicable or transferable to other situations. *To distil these lessons is the purpose of the write-ups of Best Practice Reports.* In a nutshell, **Best Practice reports describe the distilled lessons learned of a localized experience for the purpose of knowledge transfer.** They may refer to specific elements in a project, as well as non-project interventions. The idea of "lessons learned" also includes lessons from failure in bringing about changes which are at least as useful as success lessons.

In this way Best Practice documentations are **not** a critique or a complaint document (nor is it a full-scale evaluation report), **but** it is:

- an **"after-action" review/analysis** which maximizes the experiences of one team by allowing others to learn from them;
- a dynamic, candid, professional discussion of an event or task which **focuses on the results** of the event or task;
- a document which **identifies the means to sustain what was done successful** as well as recommendations on how to improve shortfalls.

The reports will be most effective if participants agree to be honest, open and professional.

### 3. Boundaries of a Best Practices Write-up

The Best Practice write-ups do not include surveys, evaluation reports, or lengthy descriptions of developmental practices. Support material and illustrations of such nature should be submitted in the attachment. The format should include five key considerations:

- **Need to be as succinct as possible.** They need to be written up in such a way that they reduce the time for acquiring knowledge.
- **Need to describe success and failure.** Best Practice reports are not only write-ups of achievements—but since their purpose is the transfer of knowledge on how to bring about human development changes—they should include successful as well as failed experiences. But the focus should be on the lessons learned from those successes and failures.
- **Focus on why and how.** The reports need to focus on why and how a certain initiative became a success or failure, rather than describing only the success and failure itself.
- **Unit of analysis.** The unit of analysis is normally not the project. Rather it is the components of the project that managed or failed to bring about changes, or non-project activities that contributed to change.
- **Findings and conclusions.** The report needs to relate to the lessons learned regarding (a) outputs and outcomes, (b) the processes that were followed in the implementation of the project activities, and (c) “operational” principles.

In summary, any Best Practice Report needs to answer **four** basic questions:

- What did we intend to do?
- What actually happened?
- What went well, and *why*?
- What can be improved, and *how*?

### How to Use the Database

The proposed community development Best Practice database needs the input of many people. It needs as many reports as possible to provide a vital resource for the support of evidence-based development practices. The documents in the database need to be reviewed and applied, based on the specific needs of the organization or practice settings/ environments. Documents in the database should not be applied in a “cookbook” fashion but used as a tool to assist in decision-making for individualized development interventions, as well as ensuring that appropriate structures and supports are in place to provide the best possible interventions.

Country directors, planners and other administrators who are leading and facilitating practice changes will find this database valuable for the development of procedures, protocols, educational programs, assessment and documentation tools, etc. It is recommended that the documents in the community development Best Practice databases be used as resource tools. Field practitioners in community development will benefit from reviewing the recommendations, the evidence in support of the recommendations and the process that was used in the case studies. It is highly recommended that the access to the database be made as user-friendly as possible.

Country/Regional offices wishing to use the database may decide to do so in a number of ways:

- Assess current community development projects/programs by using the recommendations and lessons learned from projects in the Best Practice database.

- Identify recommendations and descriptions of activities of similar projects described in the database to help them to address identified needs in practice approaches or gaps in services of projects they are themselves involved in.
- Systematically develop a plan to train its workers on the recommendations and learned lessons in these case studies and to develop a protocol to make some of the Best Practice activities/interventions standard procedures for all of their operations.

Best Practice resources/samples should be made easily accessible to all members of the ADRA network in order to assist individuals and organizations to implement best practice lessons quickly. Eventually the administrators of the database need to develop a mechanism to review and update the information in the Best Practice description to keep them relevant.

## **OUTLINE OF BEST PRACTICES DOCUMENTATIONS**

### **Note:**

The following two attachments are samples of a general outline of two different Best Practice documentations. The **first** one documents **projects/programs** which are comprehensive ADRA activities (such as the implementation of integrated health and or community development projects). The **second** outline focuses more on specific **procedures** within the context of larger operations (such as record keeping of school attendance in vocational institutions) as well as **innovative technologies** used in projects (such as specialist nettings used for tree nurseries).

The documentation of projects will be far more comprehensive than mere procedures and innovative technologies. But in both types of reports the analytical section on the **why** and **how** and the lessons learned are the most vital part.

## **Attachment 1: Sample of Best Practice Outline for Projects/Programs**

### **PROJECT TITLE**

#### **I. BACKGROUND (3 pages)**

This section provides inside **who is involved** in the project/program. It also describes the **motivation** of the organizational entity to do the type of development work and it places the project into its **context**. This description has to be done by the project staff.

1. Background of ADRA-[country]
2. ADRA's Philosophy of Development  
What is the driving force behind the work of the agency (hopefully country-specific)?

Examples:

- Helping people to develop holistically
  - Interest in **community** development (What is the driving force to do community development?)
  - **Integrated** community development
  - **Empowering communities**—e.g. Inputs given on credit and not free (Communities have to be part of the activity)
  - **Complementing** activities of Government
  - **Collaboration** with other development partners (e.g. Government, Peace Corps, other NGO's)
3. General Background of the (country/regional) Society
    - Socio cultural, economic, political background
    - Geography of the area (including the climate, vegetation, physical features, etc, include reference maps if necessary).

#### **II. DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES (5 pages)**

This section of the Best Practice report **describes** the project activities. This description has to be done by the project staff based on data available in the project office.

1. Brief introduction (including the Log frame) summarizing the approach of the project.
2. What prompted the project? Why was there a need for this activity or strategy?  
Example: ADRA was already in reforestation and therefore was picked for the present program as lead organization
3. Literature review  
Are you aware of and have you used any type of development literature which describes a similar development strategy as found in your project?  
(List material if easily available or attach if material is not from a public source).  
What other strategies could have been used? Why was this approach selected?
4. Brief summary of all the activities in a sequential manner
  - a. Planning/designing of project
  - b. Implementation  
Examples:
    - Formation of collaboration
    - Sensitization workshop
    - Infrastructural development
    - Site housing of nursery
    - Personnel requirement
    - Selection of workers

- Distribution of inputs
- c. Monitoring (Include monitoring tools (in the attachment))
5. Report on achievements
    - a. Scope of the project
    - b. Time frame of the project
    - c. What did the project actually achieve?
    - d. Who and how many benefited from the project?
  6. External evaluations
    - When was Midterm and/or External evaluations conducted?
    - By whom was external evaluation conducted?
    - Any significant findings and recommendations noted?

### III. LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES CONFRONTED (7 pages)

This section is the **core of the Best Practice documentation**. It provides the **analytical element** of the interventions described in the previous section. In order to provide an unbiased report and analysis, the work for this section needs to be **facilitated by an external consultant** who can be most helpful in not only asking a number of probing questions but also will bring out issues which often appears most obvious to the project staff.

The purpose of this section is to determine **what worked**, and **what did not work** and **why**. It is suggested that the report analyzes the following project dimensions: (a) Outcomes/Outputs, (b) Process, (c) and Operational aspects (d) challenges, and (e) recommendations.

In each of these dimensions, the write-up should answer two major questions:

- **What were the challenges faced?**
- **What were the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies used to address those challenges?**

Additional sub-questions are merely suggestive and are intended to create an attitude of analysis and deeper inquiry. Further questions need to be raised (depending on the nature of the project/program). The intent and focus of this **analysis clearly needs to be on what lessons were learned** (even if obstacles were met).

#### 1. Lessons on Output/Outcome:

- What did you achieve? Explain the Hows and Whys of the achievement (Note: Issues of underestimation that are done by the implementers, government support not expected in relation to the achievements.)
- What was the relevance (and/or limitations) of output/outcome to the problem the project set out to address?
- What were the influential (and/or undesirable) results (results obtained outside the planned scope of activities)?

#### 2. Lessons on Process:

What were the processes that were followed in the implementation of the project and what principles were observed? Some sample questions to specific challenges could be related to:

- *Participation*: Were stakeholders involved in the design and implementation?
- *Accountability*: Were there mechanisms for transparency and access to information, participatory monitoring and evaluation systems, etc. in place?
- *Non-discrimination*: Were efforts made to ensure participation of most disadvantaged groups?
- *Empowerment*: What was the degree of decision-making capacity in beneficiaries?
- *Linkages to other development issues*: Were linkages to other development issues considered and what activities and services were available?

### **3. Operational Lessons:**

Some sample questions to specify the challenges in this area could include:

- **Constituency building:** Was the strategy successful in ensuring support by major stakeholders? Such as:
  - a. Beneficiaries (people)
  - b. Communities
  - c. Country
  - d. Agency
    - **Feasibility:** Did the planned operation/strategy manage to translate activities into outputs? Was the strategy adaptable to unplanned contexts?
    - **Cost-efficiency:** Were outputs delivered according to plan, time schedule and budget allocation?
    - **Ownership:** What was the degree of financial, social and political commitment to implementation and sustainability?
    - **Replication:** How successful has the agency been in replicating the project in its own country? What lessons have they learned in this process of replication?  
Example: Project started in a little village in the north of Ghana, but is now all over the country. Why and how did it happen in terms of replication?

### **4. Challenges**

This could include the negatives that give insights into activity implementation and mitigation strategies.

Examples:

- Climate - survival rate of seedlings
- Land Tenure Systems (sole ownership or partnership)
- Collaboration (Difficulties in bringing together and working with so many organizations)
- Challenges in Replication (replication in other geographical regions in the country)
- Marketing, sustainability, etc.

### **5. Recommendations**

This section succinctly presents the recommendations evolving from the above analysis and should be taken into account when embarking on a similar initiative or project. Why should the reader of your report want to use your described practices?

## **IV. SUMMARY BOX (Maximum 1 page)**

This box should contain a brief statement of the scope of the project (in terms of substantive and/or operational aspects) and the critical lessons and recommendations.

This section is the “executive summary” of the Best Practice documentation and will be used to advertise and promote the project. It is describing in a nutshell the “success story.”

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Manuals
2. Scanned pictures
3. Details of activities
4. Testimonies of beneficiaries
5. Report/ comments from donors, collaborators, etc
6. Case studies
7. Maps of project areas
8. Include promotional materials (such as charts, etc.)

### **BEST PRACTICE AUTHORS**

Names, contact addresses and short description of contributors to this Best Practice document.

## **Attachment 2: Sample of Best Practice Outline for *Procedures* and/or *Innovative Technologies***

### **TITLE OF PROCEDURE (or Innovative Technology)**

Example: Computer tracking program of student attendance and performance at Vocational Training Program [city and country]

### **I. BACKGROUND (2 pages)**

Since this documentation is not the analysis of a whole project but merely the analysis of a segment of a larger intervention, it is important to **describe the overall project** in order to understand in what way the innovative technology (or procedure) has contributed to the success.

This section provides inside **who is involved** in the project/program. It also describes the **motivation** of the organizational entity to do the type of development work and it places the project into its **context**.

This description has to be done by the project staff.

1. The place where the project is being implemented
2. The type of overall interventions this procedure is a part of.  
Example: It is part of a vocational training school for refugees and internally displaced people.
3. The **reason** why this special procedure was **necessary** to be developed and implemented?  
Examples:
  - The large and unexpected increase of students
  - Keep track of the customary absenteeism in educational programs
  - To avoid awarding certificates to students who missed excessively
  - To increase the credibility of program by demonstrating that only students with an acceptable attendance record would graduate
  - To ensure grades were based on clearly established guidelines and established targets

### **II. DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURE (INNOVATIVE ACTIVITY) (4 pages)**

This section is the **core of the Best Practice documentation** for procedures (and innovative activities). It actually **describes in detail** the procedure. This is different from the Best Practice description of projects, where the analysis is the core section. This description has to be done by the project staff in order to demonstrate and help people in similar situations to learn to apply and adopt a successful procedure.

1. Briefly describe what this procedure was able to do.
2. Literature/technology review (Which technology is the basis for your procedure?)  
Examples:
  - Type of computer program/language was used to construct the program
  - Type of hardware is being required to run the program
3. What other strategies/technologies/procedures could have been used (maybe you even experimented with)? Why was this approach selected?
4. Summarize in technical terms how you developed your procedure
  - a. Planning/designing of procedure
  - b. Implementation of procedure
5. Replication:  
Have you been able to replicate the procedure in a similar setting? Describe which modifications you did from the original design.

### **III. LESSONS LEARNED AND CHALLENGES CONFRONTED (4 pages)**

This section is important for **Best Practice documentation**. It provides the **analytical element** of the interventions described in the previous section. It might not necessarily require as much an external consultant as the project analysis, but it would **benefit from an external person** who has similar **technical skills** to probe how the procedure worked and what technical skills were necessary to develop the procedure

The purpose of this section is to determine **what** worked, and **what did not** work and **why**.

The write-up should answer four major questions:

- **What has the procedure (or innovative activity) contributed to the overall project?**
- **What were the strengths and weaknesses of the procedure (or innovative activity)? (With other words what are the “pitfalls” that need to be observed to apply the procedures successfully?)**
- **How this procedure (or innovative technology) contributed to a better project?**  
Example:
  - Did it lower the cost per unit?
  - Did it contribute to a greater efficiency in your overall program?
  - Was it able to contribute to some breakthrough of a cultural or political obstacles, etc.?
- **Why should the reader of your report want to use your described practices?**

#### **IV. SUMMARY BOX (Maximum 1 page)**

This box should contain a brief statement of the scope of the procedure or innovative activity (in terms of substantive and/or operational aspects) and the critical lessons and recommendations.

This section is the “executive summary” of the Best Practice documentation and will be used to advertise and promote the procedure or innovative activity. It is describing in a nutshell the “success story.”

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Manuals
2. Print outs
3. Reports

#### **BEST PRACTICE AUTHORS**

Names, contact addresses and short description of contributors to this Best Practice document.

**APPENDIX C: ICB WORKPLAN (FY 2006)**

**ADRA INTERNATIONAL**

**Adventist Development and Relief Agency International**

**INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING WORKPLAN**

**Grant #: AFP-A-00-04-00013-00**

**YEAR 3**

**October 1, 2005 to September 29, 2006**

## Acronym List

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ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
APLI	ADRA Professional Leadership Institute
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HQ	Headquarters
ICB	Institutional Capacity Building
IR	Intermediate Result
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIS	Management Information System
SMART	Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic and Time bound
SO	Strategic Objective

### I. ADRA's Strategic Framework

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ADRA's has three strategic objectives for the ICB project. Under each strategic objective ADRA has developed Intermediate Results with corresponding intervention which will bolster and ultimately lead to the achievement of the strategic objectives.

SO1: Increased use of best practices that reduce vulnerable population's risk of food insecurity.

IR 1.1: Institutionalized best practices and increased organizational capacity in programs which reduce population's vulnerability to food security.

SO2: Increased collaboration within and outside the ADRA Network.

IR 2.1: Increased collaboration between ADRA technical portfolios and the broader ADRA Network.

SO3: Timely and efficient FS Management Systems in both HQ and field offices.

IR 3.1: Improved Food Security Management Information System

IR 3.2: Improved accounting, inventory and logistics management software

## II. ADRA's Strategic Objectives, Intermediate Results and Activities

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During the third year of the ICB grant, ADRA will continue to focus its efforts on improving the technical and administrative capacity to effectively design, implement and monitor its Title II programs.

During the first two years ADRA has worked to establish the base upon which best practices can be disseminated, venues through which collaboration within and outside of the ADRA network can take place and systems with which field offices will be able to better manage Title II projects.

In the third year the first fruits of the previous two years of set up will begin to be seen. The dissemination of best practices will take place, training seminars will take place using curriculums developed, and tools using the standardized indicators will be put into use.

Each Intermediate Result and the activities proposed for implementation for year 3 will be discussed in the sections below.

SO 1: Increased use of best practices that reduce vulnerable population's risk of food insecurity.

### **IR 1.1: Institutionalized best practices and increased organizational capacity in programs which reduce population's vulnerability to food security.**

Activities which fall under IR 1.1 for year 3 include:

1. *Development of Protocol and systematic methodologies and process for identification, documentation and dissemination of best practices.* The development this protocol was begun in the third quarter of the second year. The completed protocol is set for the third quarter of the third year.
2. *Training of field officers on the use of template and protocols.* ADRA will take advantage of the APLI training sessions it holds for key staff around the world to demonstrate to field officers the process for identifying and documenting best practices.
3. *Selection of field program best practices for documentation.* Through field visits and periodic progress reports ADRA International has a well informed idea of what some of the possible best practices are. With the APLI training ADRA expects that additional best practices will be revealed. ADRA International will select 2 best practices to be documented by the end of the third quarter of year 3.
4. *Provision of field supervision for documentation of best practices.* This activity will be carried out during the entire third year until the end of the project.
5. *Editing of Documented Best Practices.* This activity will be carried out at the headquarters level during the entire third year until the end of the project.
6. *Publication and dissemination of Best Practices.* This activity will be carried out during the entire third year, and will continue until the end of the project.

SO 2: Increased collaboration within and outside the ADRA Network

## **IR 2.1: Increased collaboration between ADRA technical portfolios and the broader ADRA Network.**

Activities which fall under IR 2.1 for year 3 include:

1. *Organization of collaborative workshops and meetings among other food security related portfolios within ADRA Network during annual Food Forums.* Previously ADRA held annual Food Forums. This meeting has been reorganized and is now included in the APLI training seminars. The APLI session corresponding to the food forum will be held in the third quarter of the third, fourth and fifth years.
2. *Periodic publication of documented Best Practices in the network-wide quarterly publications - (First Monday).* The best practices documented throughout the year will be published in a special edition of the ADRA network publication First Monday. This publication is sent to all 120+ ADRA field offices. The Best Practices issue is scheduled to be printed in the fourth quarter of the third year.

SO 3: Timely and efficient Food Security Management Systems in both HQ and field offices.

## **IR 3.1: Improved Food Security Management Information System**

Activities which fall under IR 3.1 during year 3 include:

1. *Active Participation and collaboration with SMART, FANTA and other organizations on standardization of developmental relief indicators.* FANTA has been an active contributor to the development of the M&E plans for each of ADRA's Title II programs. Beginning in year 1 ADRA initiated a comparative analysis of its Title II indicators. The results showed that the Title II countries are reporting similar information but using slightly different indicators. ADRA also conducted a baseline study to see the feasibility of reporting on standardized MDG indicators. This also proved that programs are tracking similar information but not identical information as the MDG indicators demand. In the third year ADRA will seek the continued collaboration of FANTA, SMART and other organizations to complete this standardization of developmental relief indicators. As this is a dynamic process this activity will continue throughout the life of the project.
2. *Complete the development of the Field program Quality Assessment tools and pilot test it in three Title II countries.* To ensure that all ADRA Title II programs are evaluated from a similar platform, ADRA will be developing the Field Program Quality Assessment tool throughout year 3.
3. *Development of a Compendium of appropriate indicators for ADRA FS programs.* This activity is tied closely to the first activity in this section. ADRA hopes to have a presentable compendium of indicators by the end of the second quarter of the third year.
4. *Workshop for field officers on the use of the compendium of appropriate FS indicators.* This workshop will be held as an APLI session during the second quarter of the third year. This workshop will be attended by Title II M&E officers. In this workshop the compendium of indicators for FS programs will be presented. Those countries which can begin using some of these indicators will adapt their M&E plans at that point.

5. *Supervision on the adoption and usage of the compendium of appropriate FS indicators.* Beginning in the middle of year three, ADRA will begin to monitor the adoption and usage of FS indicators. This will be done at the field level for already existing programs as well as during the planning stage of new relief development programs. This activity will continue until the end of the project.
6. *Designing and development of appropriate data collection instruments/tools for standardized indicators.* The compendium of standardized indicators will be accompanied by a packet of data collection instruments/tools. These tools and instruments will be presented at the APLI training session. Therefore this activity must be completed by the second quarter of the third year.
7. *Complete the Monitoring and Evaluation curriculum for ADRA Professional Leadership Institute program (APLI).* The APLI has been mentioned several times in this work plan already. This program composed of multiple curriculums on various topics. One of the core topics will be Monitoring and Evaluation. This curriculum will be presented annually either in Latin America, Africa, or Asia to ADRA staff who have a vested interest in M&E. The M&E curriculum will be completed by the first quarter of the third year.
8. *Complete the Monitoring Modules for the APLI training.* This activity will also be completed by the second quarter of the third year to be presented at the APLI training.
9. *Training session on the installation and usage of computerized MIS.* The Management Information System is a computerized M & E system that is currently being pilot tested in two Title II countries. By the second quarter of the third year ADRA will have come to a conclusion about how this MIS can be either replicated or adapted to serve in other Title II countries. Throughout the third year ADRA plans to install and conduct training sessions in eight Title II countries.
10. *Follow-up training and installation of MIS in field offices.* Beginning in the final quarter of year three ADRA will analyze the areas of the MIS which additional training. This activity will continue until the first quarter of the fifth year.
11. *Development and installation of HQ centralized MIS for field data upload.* This activity commence in the final quarter of the third year.
12. *Periodic Upgrading of MIS system in HQ and field offices.* To keep the system relevant to the changing environment, ADRA will periodically update the MIS system at the HQ level after it is installed beginning in the fourth quarter of the third year.

### **IR 3.2: Improved accounting, inventory and logistics management software**

Activities which fall under IR 3.2 during year 3 include:

1. *Training session on the installation and usage of commodity tracking system (CTS).* Initial CTS training began in year 2 and will continue into the first quarter of the third year for countries with Title II programs. CTS training will be done in subsequent years for new Title II projects.
2. *Follow-up training and installation of CTS in field offices.* Refresher courses on the CTS will be held in the first and second quarter of the third year for those countries which had the initial CTS training in year two.
3. *Periodic Upgrading of CTS system in HQ and field offices.* Maintaining the CTS system up to date and relevant to the needs of the countries will be a priority. By the third quarter of year three all annual updating of the CTS should have been completed.

4. *Collaborate with Monetization Umbrella agencies to establish flow of financial data and support doc.* This is an ongoing activity which began in year 2 and will continue until the end of the project.
5. *Conduct Field Audits and Internal Audit Committee Meetings.* To ensure the financial integrity of all ADRA Title II projects, ADRA International continuously conducts field audits and holds internal audit committee meetings. This activity has been occurring since the beginning of the project and will continue until the end of the project.
6. *Conduct Financial Training Seminars.* ADRA has developed a finance curriculum for the APLI program. These financial training seminars will be conducted during the APLI session which falls in the first quarter of the third year.
7. *Conduct New DAP Start-up workshops (DIP).* DAP start-up workshops are conducted in-country for every new Title II with all of the newly hired program staff. These workshops will be held in the countries where a DAP is commencing in the third year in either the first or the second quarter.
8. *Participate in budgeting of DAP proposals.* Personnel from the finance sector will be integrated into the DAP/MYAP proposal writing process by reviewing and giving suggestions on budgetary issues. This activity will follow the proposal submission cycle for DAP/MYAP proposals which normally falls in the first or second quarter of each fiscal year.
9. *Logistics Control Field Visits.* This activity began in the second year and will continue until the end of the project.

## **APPENDIX D: ICB MID-TERM EVALUATION SCOPE OF WORK**

### **Introduction**

ADRA's USAID/FFP-funded Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) grant aims to increase ADRA's capacity to reduce the risk of food insecurity among vulnerable populations assisted through its food supported programs. This goal is to be achieved through the strategic objectives:

1. Increased use of best practices that reduce vulnerable populations' risk of food insecurity.
2. Increased collaboration within and outside the ADRA network
3. Timely and efficient FS management systems in both headquarters and field offices.

During the first two years ADRA has worked to establish the base upon which best practices can be disseminated, venues through which collaboration within and outside of the ADRA network can take place and systems with which field offices will be able to better manage Title II projects. During the third year of the ICB grant, ADRA will continue to focus its efforts on improving the technical and administrative capacity to effectively design, implement and monitor its Title II programs.

As per the ICB grant Transfer Authorization, the recipient is required to conduct a mid-term and external final evaluation. A mid-term review must be carried out in year three of a five-year activity. The mid-term review should determine whether the activity is being implemented in a timely and cost-effective way, and whether the program is likely to achieve its goals in terms of its specific objectives and intermediate results. Project management, sustainability, institutional strengthening, and training should be examined. The M&E systems should be reviewed to ensure that the indicators are being objectively measured, include specific measurement units, and have clear links to program activities.

### **Purpose of the Mid-term Evaluation**

The purpose of the Mid Term is to: 1) determine progress the program has made toward reaching its targets; 2) refine the program's targets if needed; 3) review the appropriateness of the program's activity; 4) identify the program's constraints and difficulties plus successes; and 5) make recommendations to improve the program performance, or, as appropriate and suggest modifications or discontinuance of activities.

### **Methodology**

The methodology shall include the following:

*International travel* - There shall not be any international traveling for this ICB Mid Term Evaluation.

*Review Literature* - the evaluation team should conduct a literature review of selected documents to identify the ICB program key issues. The evaluation team should review the information available at ADRA/HQ and FFP. In addition, the team should obtain essential data regarding ADRA's individual Title II programs by reviewing the annual reporting documentation.

*Interview Officials* (most of these interviews are by telephone) - Interview officials involved with Title II at USAID/Washington, ADRA/HQ, USAID Missions, ADRA field offices, other donor organizations, and private agencies.

*Develop a Framework of Analysis* - the evaluation team, taking into consideration this SOW, should develop a framework for analyzing program delivery based on the information collected during the literature, desk, and ADRA staff interviews.

*Collect Rapid Data* - the evaluation team should use some rapid data collection technique of its own. This could be accomplished through ADRA HQ staff and implementing staff.

## **ADRA s ICB Strategic Objectives**

ADRA's has three strategic objectives for the ICB Program. Under each strategic objective ADRA has developed Intermediate Results with corresponding intervention which will bolster and ultimately lead to the achievement of the strategic objectives.

### **SO 1: INCREASED USE OF BEST PRACTICES THAT REDUCE VULNERABLE POPULATIONS RISK OF FOOD INSECURITY**

**IR 1.1:** Institutionalize best practices and increase organizational capacity in programs which reduce population's vulnerability to food insecurity

**IR 1.2:** Develop innovative HIV/AIDS strategies based on the CBFS framework that address food insecurity among people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) and those affected by the virus.

### **SO 2: INCREASED COLLABORATION WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE ADRA NETWORK.**

**IR 2.1:** Increased collaboration between ADRA technical portfolios and the broader network.

**IR 2.2:** Increased collaboration and coordination amongst civil society and local government in Title II targeted communities

**IR 2.3:** Increased collaboration with other PVOs and groups involved in food security

### **SO 3: TIMELY AND EFFICIENT FS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN BOTH HEADQUARTERS AND FIELD OFFICES**

**IR 3.1:** Improved FS Management Information systems for timely and efficient decision-making

**IR 3.2:** Improved accounting, inventory and logistics management

#### **Expected Activities for Year One**

The ICB grant for ADRA was approved in June and the agreement was signed on July 19, 2004 just two months ahead of the FY04 closure. Due to this circumstance ADRA International limited its year one ICB activities to SO3 which deals with the timely and efficient FS management and administrative systems at both HQ and Field Offices.

The expected impact was to be reflected in the number of ADRA's Title II program countries which score more than 80% on Quality Assurance system.

To measure this achievement, ADRA was to develop an institutional capacity assessment tool to evaluate the management capacity of ADRA field offices and come up with an action plan to achieve its stated goal. ADRA planned to apply this assessment tool to four of the Title II programs in FY05.

This tool includes 1) Improved FS Management Information systems for timely and efficient decision-making and 2) Improved accounting, inventory and logistics management

Improved FS Management Information systems for timely and efficient decision-making

*Did ADRA develop institutional capacity assessment tool to evaluate the management capacity of ADRA field offices?*

*How effective is this tool in assessing the management capacity of ADRA field offices?*

*How many programs are systematically using information systems to monitor performance?*

ADRA is monitoring the change in the timeliness and efficiency of decision-making through a pilot test of a computerized M&E system within Ghana and Guinea.

*What are the findings of the pilot test of a computerized M&E system within Ghana and Guinea?*

*What is the level of ADRA's satisfaction in its findings?*

*Has ADRA expanded this computerized M&E system into any additional countries during the past life of ICB funding? If so, what are the degrees of ADRA's success in each of the countries it introduces the system? State the positive and the negative (if any) outcome of this approach.*

ADRA has also developed a second information system called the Commodity Tracking System. This system tracks commodity receipts, warehouse inventories, and distribution data.

*To date, how many countries have been introduced to the Commodity Tracking System?  
If any, how much improvement is observed in the management of Commodity Tracking System in each of the countries?*

Compendium of Indicators for development relief programs - This core of standardized indicators will be used as a tool to develop M&E plans of future Title II programs. ADRA envisions that a standardized core of indicators will make the M&E plans of new Title II program stronger and will also enable ADRA to measure progress in certain areas across the network using identical indicators.

Did ADRA select the core set of standardized indicators? If so, how are the standardized indicators are being used as a tool to develop M&E plans of future Title II programs? To what degree do these indicators are helping in improving the Title II program management?

Improved accounting, inventory and logistics management - ADRA stated that the ADRA Finance and M&E sectors have worked together to develop a template which ties the approved activities with the approved budget. This process is set in place during the DAP start-up workshops.

*To date, what is the number of programs with budgets linked to operational plan?  
How many programs are currently tracking quarterly program performance with quarterly expenditures by activity? How did this affect the Title II management system?*

ADRA International will work with the countries to find out if there are any impediments in the financial reporting systems making it difficult to consistently

What percent of ADRA's programs submit accurate and timely financial report? Considering the life of ICB funding so far, does this percentage reflect that the improvement of management system on track?

Financial Compliance and Monitoring workshops - ADRA is planning on holding a regional Financial Compliance and Monitoring workshop

As of to the date of the Mid Term Evaluation, how many Financial Compliance and Monitoring workshops were held? Is there anyway of gagging the effectiveness of these workshops? If so, how effective were the countries who had these workshops compared to the countries that did not have the workshops in improving the ADRA's management of Title II programs?

Number of Program submitting Accurate and Timely CSR and RSR Report - ADRA will be working with the new DAP country offices and the one tardy country office to ensure that commodity information systems are in-place and functioning.

Taking into consideration the life of ICB so far, is ADRA making an acceptable progress in this area? See Annual Performance Reports, including Indicator Performance Tracking Table, and Detailed Implementation Plan for more details.

Specific Areas the Evaluation Team need to Address

Depending on the time of the Mid Term Evaluation, the evaluation team needs to look at each of the activities stated under each strategic objective and its corresponding intermediate results for every year and address the following areas.

Did ADRA implement each of the activities stated below? Are there activities that were not implemented? If so, state the reason/s whether positive or negative.

Where these activities were implemented in a timely manner? If not would it have made any difference? State your reasoning.

With regard to monitoring and evaluation systems, are indicators objectively measured, include specific measurement units, have clear links to program activities? If revisions or additions to the Indicator Performance Tracking Table are recommended, please explain and justify.

In terms of effectiveness, did the implementation of the activities enhance ADRA' overall managerial capacity both at the HQ and at the field office? If yes, explain in detail how?

In terms of efficiency, from the evaluators' perspective, could the same or better result been achieved through utilizing other known approaches. Limit your discussion to utilization of resources – man power, economic and time.)

Are there any unexpected positive or negative outcomes of ADRA's ICB program? If yes, how is the program affected by these outcomes?

**Sustainability** – From the evaluators point of view, can ADRA sustain the managing capacity that it achieved through ICB program when the funding stop? Explain in detail your response with supporting documents and evidences as necessary.

#### **Evaluation Team Composition**

The evaluation team will include: one or two external evaluators and ADRA International's Director of Evaluation. The evaluation will be conducted in partnership with the food security team, particularly those in a position to act on the MTE results.

#### **Budget**

Costs for the MTE will be covered by the match portion of the ICB budget. Total costs are estimated at \$10,000.

#### **Reporting Requirement**

1. Title Page
2. List of Acronyms
3. Executive Summary
4. Table of Contents
5. Body
  1. Introduction and background
  2. Evaluation methodology
  3. Program Assessment
  4. Sustainability Issues
  5. Lessons Learned and recommendations
6. Appendices

#### **Timeframe**

April-June 2006, with final report submission to USAID/FFP by June 30, 2006